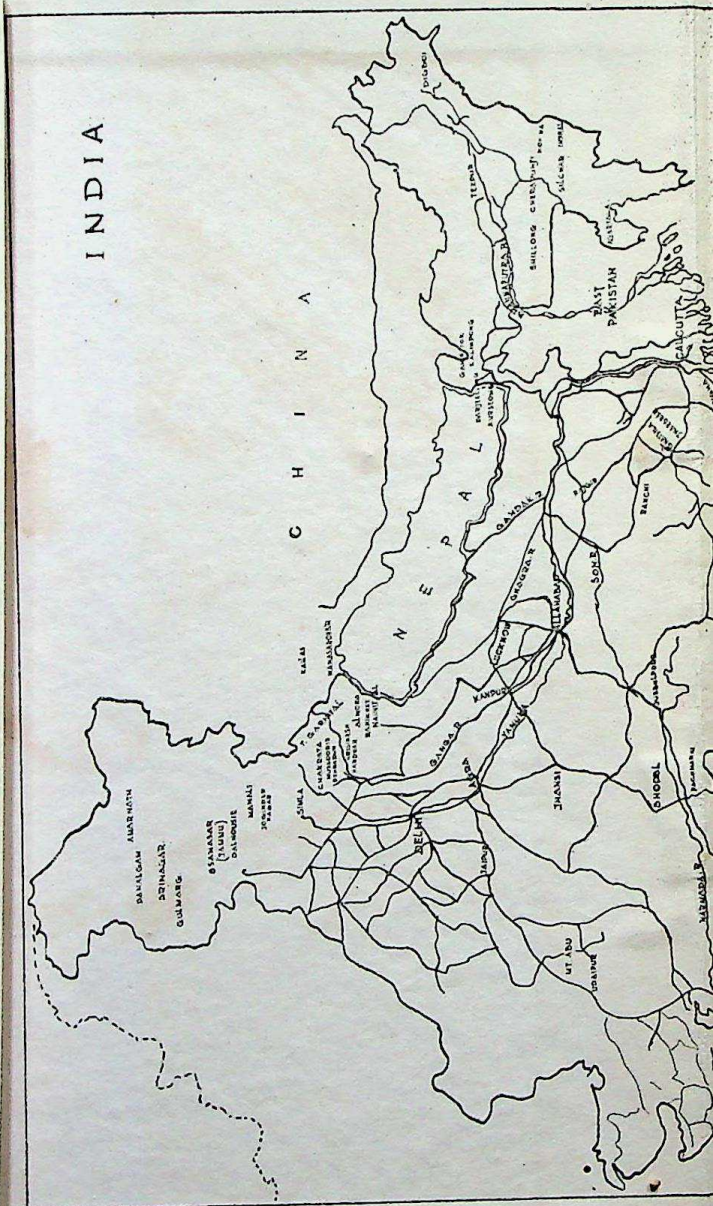


NATURE'S SPLENDOUR SPOTS IN INDIA

by

B. B. Banerjee





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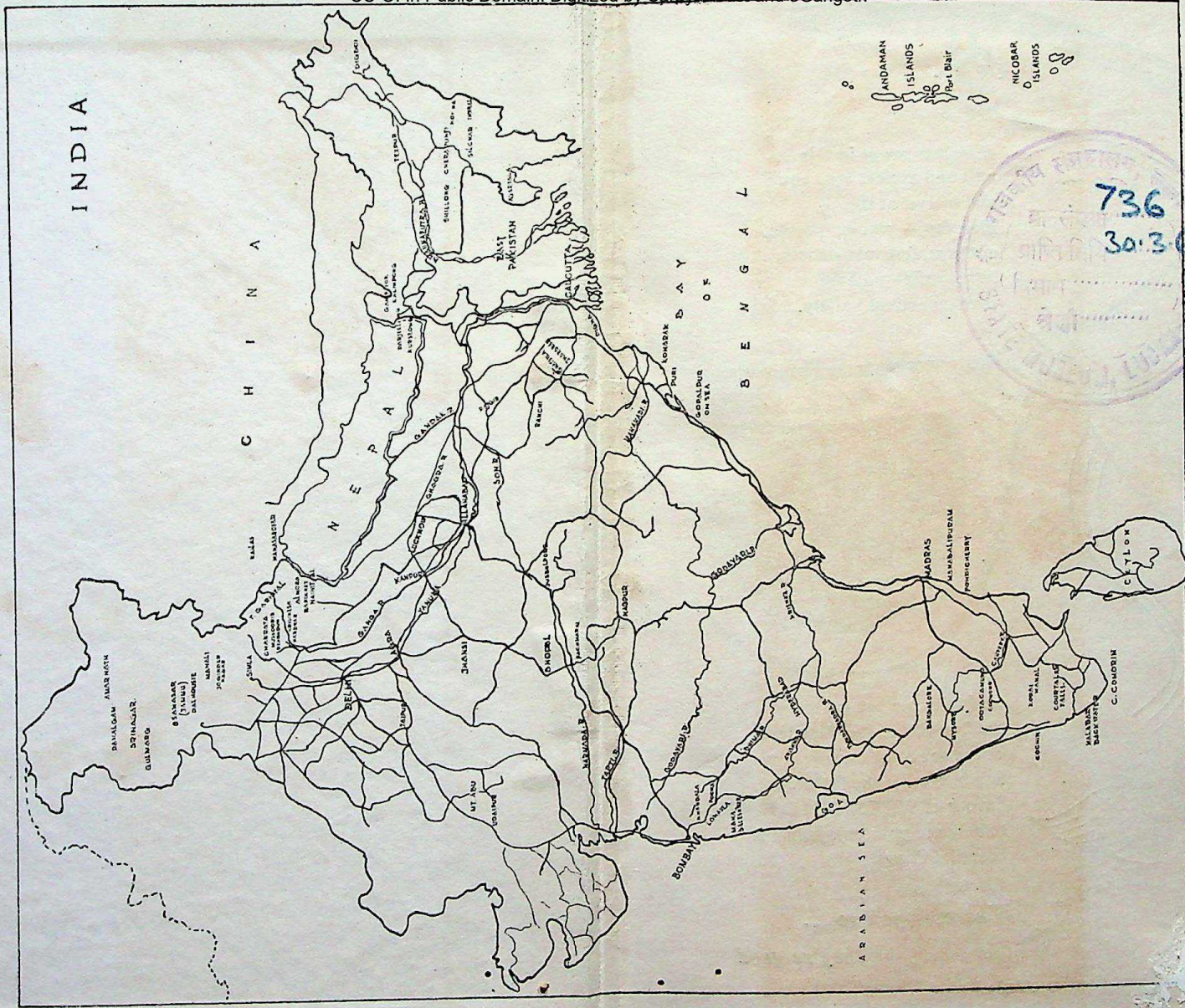
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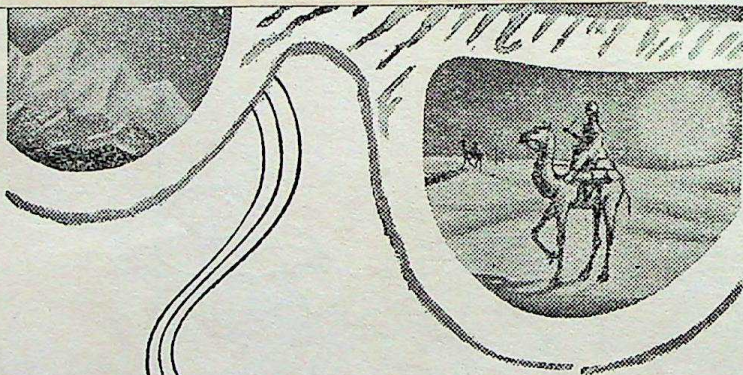
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NATURE'S SPLENDOUR SPOTS IN INDIA

By
B. B. BANERJEE

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PREFACE

The ancient marvels of art and archæology of India seem to have received good publicity. The Government of India too have done commendable work of late in this direction. The charming Hill Stations of India and numerous other places of great beauty scattered throughout the length and breadth of this huge sub-continent do not, however, seem to have been adequately presented so far in a single compact volume. This is, therefore, an attempt to do the same although the magnitude of the task is evidently beyond the capacity of any single individual. There must therefore be many shortcomings and omissions which the reader is requested very kindly to overlook.

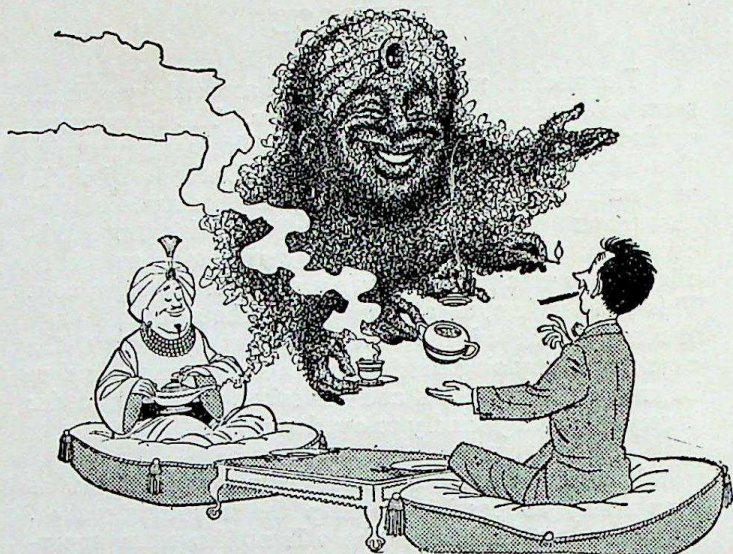
Endeavour has been made to present each place as graphically as possible to help the intending visitor. To those less fortunate, who will not have the opportunity of visiting the places, it will also convey some idea of their rare beauty.

Should this humble attempt create eagerness in the mind of the readers—especially the young of both sexes—to visit these charming places and benefit thereby, the labours of the author will be amply rewarded. The foreigner will also find the volume handy and useful.

Although most of the places have been personally visited by the author, a few particulars had to be collected from articles appearing in the papers and periodicals or from published volumes. As it is not possible to acknowledge each individually, the author takes this opportunity of expressing his indebtedness to them all.

AUTHOR.

CALCUTTA;
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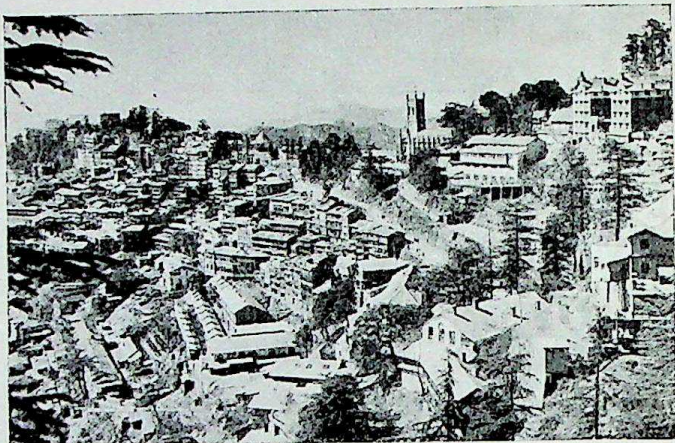
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SIMLA

Simla is the hill station *par excellence* in India. In British days it was not only the summer seat of the Viceroy of India but accommodated simultaneously the Commander-in-Chief of India and the Governor of the Punjab. To this was added the 'refugee' Governor of Burma for about 5 years when Japan overran that land. Imagine the vast areas required to house these dignitaries with all their huge paraphernalia. Thus Simla is the biggest hill station in India and it is doubtful if any bigger exists in the world.

A night's journey from Delhi is Kalka whence the hill climb commences. An interesting little train runs for 56 miles before it reaches Simla. There are as many as 103 tunnels in these wonderful 56 miles, the longest being at Borog. One can go by road too. A host of taxis and buses await the passengers at Kalka. The motor road is broad enough for simultaneous up and down traffic and does not have a single tunnel. The towns of Dharampur and Solan which come *en route* are known for T. B. Sanatorium and Brewery, respectively. Kasouli, known for Anti-Rabic treatment, is a little away from the main route. The engineering skill of the railway line is often breath-taking for the newcomer and the scenery is exciting throughout. At the end of the journey, when great Simla comes to view sprawling on top of the hills, the long wait of the visitor is amply rewarded. Simla has been described as:

"A queenly city set on the throne of Himalayan hills." It is so indeed.



The Town, Simla.

The Mall Road is the heart of Simla. Between the Rashtrapati Bhawan and the Punjab Secretariat, it stretches for over three miles. Not only do all the elegant shops, restaurants, banks and gigantic office buildings stand on this road but it also throughout commands exquisite Himalayan vistas on one side or the other. For its tremendous popularity, it is regarded by some as the most popular thoroughfare of Northern India. The crowd of nicely dressed ladies and gentlemen moving slowly up and down the Mall for hours in the evening is really a fascinating sight. Summer Hill which is a suburb of Simla has a separate railway station. The far-flung localities like Boileaugunj, Sanjouli and Chota Simla are almost self-contained.

The evergreen deodars of lofty Jakko Hill provide very pleasing background to the town and this hill has, on its summit, the Hanumanji temple with its sadhus and troop of monkeys.

Two other shapely hills which add to beauty are the Elysium and the Prospect hills. The latter has the

Kamna Devi temple on its top and provides a vantage ground for the nicest view of Simla and beyond. On a clear day, Sutlej can be sighted from here flowing away like a silver ribbon. Sunrise view from Jakko and sunset from Prospect are famous.

Simla enjoys excellent health almost throughout the year. Young people gain weight surprisingly fast.

Very few hill stations can claim such numerous long and pleasant walks as Simla. There are the Jakko rounds (big and small), Elysium round, Observatory Hill round and Rashtrapati Bhawan round. Everyone of these rounds provides sufficient plain walk and passes through attractive scenery.

The Race Course of Simla—Annandale—was once the home of the famous Durand Football Tournament. A nice, broad, motorable road leads to the circular spot which is surrounded almost on all sides by lofty hills fully clothed with pine and deodar. This is easily one of the best beauty spots of India.

About 7,000 feet in altitude, Simla has quite heavy snowfall throughout January and in part of February. The vast hill station under a thick mantle of snow is a wonderful sight.

Kufri—8 miles away—has a Ski Club. One may enjoy almost Alpine winter sports here.

Simla is, perhaps, the only place in India having arrangement for artificial ice-skating. In the extensive Blessington courts, water is collected and artificially frozen. Delightful ice-skating starts about November under beautiful lighting arrangement and attended by a band. Even to watch the graceful movements in the idyllic environment is a sufficient enjoyment.

Although a finely laid-out town, the natural scenery of Simla lies more in the green-mantled hills beyond. Practically every house commands extensive open view stretching for miles.

Apart from Kufri, already mentioned, excursions can be arranged to several other beautiful places. Mashobra, 6 miles up, is a delightful spot. It had the Viceroy's Garden House, now used by Rashtrapati. The Carignano dak bungalow there is a real beauty spot. It is under the management of the Simla Municipal Committee and is open for stay to visitors. Excursions can also be arranged to Naldera, 12 miles away, Sulphur Spring and Narkanda, 29 and 39 miles away, respectively. Snow view from Narkanda is magnificent.

Beyond Narkanda is Kadrula which is the terminus of the bus route. The scenery is very fine and the dak bungalow yields a magnificent view of Mount Kailash and whole of the table-land, holding the Mansarovara Lake.

PLACES OF INTEREST :

1. *Hanumanji Temple*—At a further 2,000 ft. height, on the lofty Jakko hill, it is very popular. A regular broad road, lined on both sides by stately bungalows, leads to the very top beneath shady deodars.

2. *Glen*—About a couple of miles steep down the hill, a lovely shady road leads to this unique beauty spot with a hill stream gurgling over huge boulders, providing for the visitor an ideal picnic spot. The scenery in the sequestered road is charming throughout. Hundreds of rhododendron trees covered all over with scarlet blooms are unforgettably beautiful.

3. *Sanjauli*—Originally a small hamlet, about a couple of miles away on the opposite side of Jakko hill, now a prosperous suburb, covers the top of a wind-swept open ridge and commands lovely scenery for miles on both sides. The road from Simla skirting half of Jakko is almost level walk and is very pretty.

4. *Mashobra*—About 6 miles away, this township is really a haven of peace and beauty. Carignano Dak Bungalow there is an idyllic picnic spot.

5. *Taradevi*—Famous for the temple of Goddess Taradevi, it has a railway station too. From the station to the Temple is a rambling foot track through beautiful forest scenery.

6. *Chadwick Fall*—Is about a mile from Summer Hill railway station. The track to the fall is very steep and somewhat risky during rains.

CLIMATE :

Although April, May & June and September & October are the two main seasons, the weather continues to be pleasant all through till winter. Even the rains are not at all dull and monotonous as in Darjeeling or Shillong. It rarely rains continuously for days. If the morning is rainy one may safely plan a programme out for the afternoon on most days. With proper clothing, most of the winter too is enjoyable and extremely healthy. There is snow fall at least once a week throughout January and February.

The maximum temperature in summer is 90° F. and in winter 65° F. The minimum is 52° F. in summer and 22° F. in winter.

LIBRARIES AND READING ROOMS :

There are two very well stocked libraries of English books : (1) the Station Library and (2) the Punjab Government Library.

The Reading Room on the Mall is delightful.

HOTELS AND LODGINGS :

Of the European style hotels, Cecil Hotel is the foremost. The next best are Clarkes Hotel, Metro-pole, etc. The Grand Hotel is now restricted to Government servants only.

The Indian style hotels are Baljees Hotel and Restaurant, Coronation, Central, Royal, Hindu hotels, etc.

The Bengalee Kalibari has good boarding and lodging ~~arrangement~~ for Hindus at a very moderate rate.

MUSSOORIE

One of the most popular hill stations in India is Mussoorie, which is reputed as much for its bracing air as for its healthy water. Not being connected with officialdom, like Simla, Nainital, Darjeeling or Shillong, it is a pleasure resort in true sense as well as a health resort.

Being about 7,000 ft. in altitude, it is delightfully cool in summer and severely cold in winter. Snowfall in winter is as heavy as in Simla.

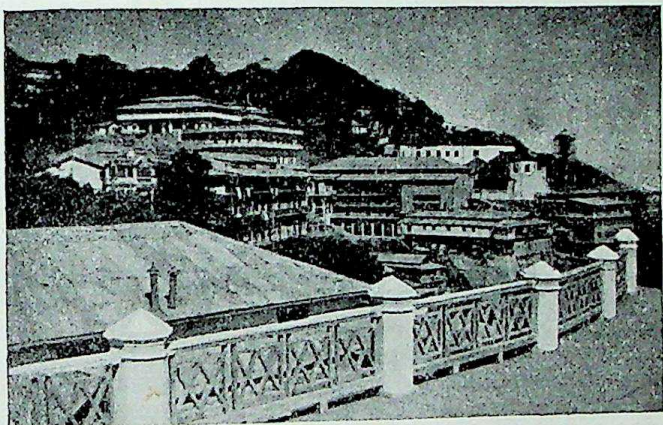
Distance of Mussoorie from the railhead at Dehra-dun is about 20 miles. The first 6 miles is covered by the beautifully broad Rajpur Road which cuts across practically the whole of Dehra-dun town and terminates at the small township of Rajpur.

Here the hill climb begins. Formerly visitors had to go by tonga upto Rajpur and take pony or Dandi there for Mussoorie. All this is changed now. Luxurious state buses or taxis take the visitor from Dehra-dun railway station right up to Mussoorie, with the result that Rajpur has dwindled in importance in spite of its lovely situation and beautiful climate.

The motor road from Rajpur to Mussoorie, covering about 15 miles, is different from the old pony road of 8 miles. That road is being used now by pedestrians only. The Railway Department has a big residential school for the children of Railway Employees at Jharipani on this shorter road. Barlowgunj, where there is the famous St. George's School, is also on this road.

The motor-road terminates at Kincaig motor stand just below Mussoorie town. Motors of various colours standing at the circular motor-stand look very pretty from Mussoorie, over a thousand feet higher up. Mussoorie is one of the neatest hill stations in India. The Mall Road which covers virtually the whole of the

town is lined on both sides by lovely elegant shops, hotels and cinema houses and passes through Kutri Bazar and the recently built New Market. The road is cemented in the busiest portion. The Hackman's Hotel on this road is justly famous for its elegance and mostly for its amusements.



Library Bazar, Mussoorie.

Good Hotels in Mussoorie both in European and Indian style are too numerous to mention, most of which arrange amusements of all sorts. Thus night life of Mussoorie is probably the gayest of all hill stations in India. It, therefore, attracts more film-stars than any other hill station and they in turn attract many visitors, mostly young people of both sexes.

Of all the hotels, Charleville is most aristocratic and is situated in a secluded locality, almost outside the town, in loveliest sylvan surroundings. The extensive Municipal Garden, too, is in the same neighbourhood.

Of the numerous delightful roads, Lady's Mile is the most popular, evidently because it is almost level walk and passes through charming scenery.

In the evening most visitors foregather at Library Bazar where the Mall Road broadens out beautifully into Chowra Maidan.

Landour Bazar at the opposite end of the Mall used to be the Hill Depot for British Troops in pre-Independence days.

Lal Tibba is the highest point of the town. Formerly it was used for the time signal gunfire.

The bulk of the town runs along the top of a lengthy ridge of the Himalayas and the Mall runs in the middle. All houses on the Mall, therefore, command lovely distant view on both sides of the hill. Houses on the hill-sides too enjoy distant view on one side. Those open to the south have the charming view of the lights of extensive Dehra-dun town at a distance down below. There are very few places in India, and for that matter, perhaps in the world, where such two famous towns as Mussoorie and Dehra-dun are mutually visible. The sight is unique indeed.

On the northern side of the town, lofty Himalayan ranges stretch along the horizon across the *Khud*. In a clear season, a few snow-capped Himalayan peaks may be spied at a distance.

Thus, although somewhat smaller than the other Himalayan hill stations, Mussoorie in point of scenery, unique social attractions and splendid health is one of the favoured beauty spots of India.

Mussoorie is, perhaps, the only Himalayan hill station not cut off occasionally from the world during rains by landslide and thus it is eminently suitable for stay throughout the year with Dehra-dun conveniently close at hand for shifting during the depth of winter, if needed.

PLACES OF INTEREST :

1. *Municipal Park*—Established by Col. Wyshe in 1827, it is sufficiently extensive for a hill station. Situated over a mile away from the centre of the town, it is a lovely site for picnic and for spending a quiet day out of doors.

2. *Landour*—It is at a higher level than Mussoorie proper with separate bazar, military quarters and convalescent Depot for the defence.

3. *St. George's College*—Established in 1853, it is an excellent residential institution with beautiful buildings. It is well worth a visit.

4. *Jesus and Mary Convert*—A similar institution for girls. Maintains high standard.

5. *Hampton Court*—A popular school run on European lines.

6. *Woodstock*—School run by Americans in ideal surroundings.

7. *The Himalay Club*—Established in 1841 for Europeans.

8. *Lal Tibba*—Highest point in the town commanding excellent scenery.

CLIMATE :

The season here is almost the same as in Simla. The air is remarkably pure and sweet. The place is much less congested than Simla and has the same snow-fall as there.

HOTELS AND LODGING :

The most fashionable are the Charleville, the Savoy and the Hackman's. One finds other decent hotels both in European and Indian style almost at every turn, suiting all pockets.

DEHRA DUN

Although only 2,100 ft. from sea level, the salubrious climate of Dehra Dun and its situation at the foot of the mighty Himalayas have given it the reputation almost of a hill station. Many Europeans and Anglo-Indians have built beautiful homes here, with the result that the Dalanwala locality has grown to be a beautiful European Colony. It is over a square mile in area and one of the most lovely residential areas in India. Proximity of Mussoorie, which is only about 20 miles road journey, was evidently a contributing factor. Mussoorie in summer and Dehra Dun in winter made an ideal combination hardly to be found elsewhere.

Moreover, Dehra Dun is a clean, lovely and extensive town. Its rivals in India are, perhaps, Bangalore and Ranchi, but Bangalore has neither the unique background of the Himalayas nor the mountain air, while Ranchi has not a Mussoorie within stone's throw to go up to in summer.

Chakrata, another pretty, though small, hill station, has also to be reached from Dehra Dun. Chakrata is 60 miles of road journey from Dehra Dun.

Although a tableland, Dehra Dun has plenty of little ups and downs. The river bed of Richpana borders it on two sides and the Bindal stream runs through the heart of the town. This gives it a great variety of scenery.

Another unique feature of Dehra Dun is that it is situated in the centre of a valley surrounded on all sides by the Himalayas and the Shivalik Ranges. The motor route from Saharanpur enters the valley through the 20 miles long Mohand Pass winding through charming forest scenery and over many a hill stream. The forest has been marked off now as a game sanctuary, called "Rajaji Sanctuary", after the Ex-Governor-General, Chakraverty Rajagopalachari.

It is remarkable that so many educational institutions of all-India fame are in Dehra Dun—the Doon School, Col. Browne's School, Lawrence Military School, Indian National Academy, the Joint Services Wing and Kanya Gurukul.

The Doon School, created for the children of the well-to-do, is a world by itself. Apart from the school buildings, magnificent hotels, teacher's quarters and play-grounds, there are also the separate Music Section, Art Section, Oper-air stage, etc., inside.

The multifarious activities of the great Indian National Academy and Joint Services Wing, which train up officers for India's defence, are only to be seen to be believed. The Lawrence Military School is almost a similar institution for very young boys.

Col. Browne's School and Kanya Gurukul are residential schools with extensive grounds. Besides these, there are the Welham School, also a residential School on European lines, for small children and the D. A. V. College with its massive buildings, hostels, etc. Dehra Dun has also the distinction of housing several other all-India Institutions and establishments of repute, viz., the Survey of India, Ordnance Factory, Forest Rangers School and Office of Controller of Defence Accounts (Air Force).

Besides the old offices of Geodetic Survey and quarters of its officers, which are in the city area, the new offices of the Survey of India, including the Map Printing Office, and the staff quarters have been built subsequently in a vast area called Hathibarkala.

The Ordnance Factory, which is the product of the Second World War, is in the locality called Raipur, on the other side of the river Richpana, which, with its numerous quarters, also occupies similar area. The forest Rangers' School and the office of the Controller of Defence Accounts (Air Force) also are big things.

The extensive cantonment area is on a higher level beyond the Bindal stream away from the town. It is ideally situated around the vast Polo ground with the hills of Chakrata and Mussoorie overlooking it. The big Circuit House with the Government Gardens adjacent to it is close by.

The Rajpur Road cuts across the town and connects Dehra Dun with Mussoorie *via* Rajpur. Most of Dehradun's aristocratic shops, hotels and cinemas, etc., are on this road and around the big Parade ground which is practically the nerve centre of the City. Lovely bungalows are springing up all along this 5-mile road right upto the small township of Rajpur at the foot of the Mussoorie Hills.

Of the places of interest in Dehra Dun, mention should first be made of the Jhanda Mandir, a very important ancient religious shrine. The temple belongs to the Udasi sect of Hindus, established by Rama Rai at the time of Emperor Aurangzeb. Even now, it is one of the chief centres of the sect. There is a very big heavy flag staff (Jhanda) at the entrance, covered all over with red cloth. On the occasion of the annual renewal of the cloth, a fair is held lasting for a fortnight.

Next comes the temple of Tapakeswar. This is the image of Lord Shiva in a mountain cave on the bank of the Bindal river. Water trickles from the cave roof and drops on the image night and day. A fair is held on Shivaratri Day.

Guchha Pani or the Robber's cave is an awe-inspiring place of great natural beauty.

Tapovan (or Banaprasthashram) is a big Arya Samaj establishment built recently on the dry bed of river Rachpana at the foot of a hill. It is meant for aged householders desiring to end the last days in peace and meditation.

Rajpur, only 5 miles from Dehra Dun, connected by the beautiful Rajpur Road with bus service, is a favourite place for saints and sages from early days. The Ramakrishna Mission Ashram is spacious and about half a century old.

The temple of Mother Anandamayee built a few years ago is quite big and draws large crowds.

The Ramkrishna Vivekananda Ashram, housed in quiet surroundings, is popular for its homeopathic dispensary.

The Ashram of Swami Sraddhananda, almost opposite to it, also occupies the whole top of a little hillock. A nicely built modern building, it is surrounded by a lovely flower garden. It commands charming scenery.

The Ashram of Om Maharaj, a disciple of late Swami Ram Tirtha, is a few steps above it and occupies extensive buildings.

Besides these establishments, Rajpur abounds in small cottages of many Hindu holy men. This charming spot is evidently quite suitable for quiet contemplation.

The big waterfall of Sahasra Dhara, a couple of miles from here on the hill, is an enchanting sight.

Another interesting spot in Dehra Dun is the battle field beyond Richpana river, the site of the battle of Kulunga. More interesting than the field itself is the strange inscription appearing on the reverse of the monument put up in memory of the British Officers killed in the battle. It reads—

“As a tribute of respect for our gallant adversary
Bala Bhadra Singh.”

Memorial of tribute for the enemy!

It was in 1814, in the course of War with Nepal, that the British occupied Kulunga Fort, 3 miles from Dehra-dun town.

Balabhadra with three hundred soldiers, their children and womenfolk took shelter behind the bare stone walls of Kulunga. Although naturally fortified, it was but an apology for a fort. The source of drinking water was the small hill fountain of Nalapani just outside. The attack began with 4 British regiments brought up from 4 cantonments of Northern India and a regiment kept in reserve. The troops were commanded by the famous British Officers, Maj-Genl. Gillespie, Col. Moulie and others. Prior to the attack, Balabhadra was asked to surrender. "Not before we meet in battle," was the stern and quick reply. The British laid siege to the fortress and in a short time occupied Nalapani. It was evidently a question of hours thereafter. But, strange to tell, suddenly one day came out not only all the fighting men with drawn swords but also the women and children. They stepped manfully to the waterfall, had their fill and returned without even a scratch.

Recovering from this shock, the British decided to attack. The enemy was adamant too. One by one fell the most gallant British Officers and men. The enemy's ranks thinned out too. Balabhadra could not hold out and the fort was razed to the ground. Balabhadra was evidently foolhardy but did he not deserve eminently the encomium showered by the enemy on the monument!

Thus, Dehra Dun with its splendid topography, plenty of beauty spots, rich flora, strange combination of plain and hills, with groves of lichi and mango trees and the loveliest flowers of every hue, birds of all varieties, salubrious climate, beautiful roads, sacred tradition and exciting history is really one of the loveliest places in India.

HOTELS AND LODGINGS—

The European style hotels, of which there are a few, *e.g.*, Ambassador, Regal, are all round about the parade Ground on Rajpur Road. There are excellent restaurants too near about, *e.g.*, Kwality.

The Indian style hotels are many and close to the railway station.

“Ideal Home” is a Bengalee lodging and boarding establishment on East Canal Road.

LIBRARY—

There is a good public library of English, Hindi and Urdu Books on Gandhi Road not far from the shopping centre.

CLIMATE—

Except three months of the rains, Dehra Dun is almost ideal throughout the year. Absence of hot breeze during summer makes it a haven of refuge for people of U.P., the Punjab and even some parts of M.P. The rains are exceptionally heavy.

CHAKRATA

Chakrata is 60 miles to the North of Dehra Dun. The road from Dehra Dun crosses river Jumna at Kalsi. Descending from the Himalayas, the Jumna here just emerges into the plains. The road runs almost level upto Kalsi and then begins to climb. Then it rises so fast that it covers about 5,000 feet in 30 miles. Elevation of Chakrata is about 7,000 feet, whereas Dehra-dun is only 2,100 feet. The hill portion of the road is, therefore, quite steep with sharp bends.

Kalsi is famous for the unique Asoka inscription. The long text of the edict, which is one of the best of the benevolent emperor, addresses the people as his children and expresses deep solicitude not only for their welfare in this life but also hereafter. The big marble boulder on which the edict is inscribed is only a few steps from the road and is protected by a roof over it with iron railings all round.

The town of Chakrata was built by the British who intended it to be a healthy summer resort for British troops, like Ranikhet. It was indeed ideally suited for the purpose. The dry cold air is quite invigorating and drinking water is excellent.

A solitary road about half a mile in length running on the crest of a wind-swept ridge of the Himalayas is the main part of the town. The road terminates at one end at the market place containing the few wholesale and retail shops the town possesses. At the other end are the Military offices. The few residential houses and public buildings, like the Cantonment Board Office, are in between—a respectably big Cinema House being the most prominent of them all.

Steep slopes descend on both sides of the ridge covered thickly with hill trees—mostly fir trees. The red roofs of Military barracks, Military Hospitals and other Military formations peep here and there out of the pervading green.

The big forest dak bungalow is seen at a distance perched on the top of a separate hill. There being no hotel in Chakrata, the forest dak bungalow is the only place one may take shelter in, for a short visit, with previous permission from the authorities.

Although pipe water supply exists, there is no electricity.

Being practically a Military station with negligible civil population, the Kalsi-Chakrata road is maintained by the Defence Department.

The market place caters also to the needs of the hill people round about Chakrata. Quite fair complexioned, with almost Aryan features, are these tall hill people. The women are surprisingly beautiful in tastefully attractive gay coloured garments. The region adjacent to Chakrata is known as Jaunsar Bawar and has its own language and very distinctive social customs. The social structure is based on polyandry. There is generally only one wife for all the brothers.

The region, not being easily accessible, is yet little touched by outside influence—not to speak of western influence or education. Hence the people have retained age-old customs little disturbed by the march of time. There is thus a fruitful field here for spread of education and anthropological research.

PLACES OF INTEREST :—

Although Chakrata has no specific interesting sights, the Subdivision of Jaunsar Bawar (Dehra Dun District), close at hand, sufficiently compensates the deficiency. Fair ladies with Grecian features, draped in distinctive graceful apparel, at once arrest attention. The rare existence of polyandry here also affords sufficient interest to the visitor.

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HOTELS AND LODGING :—

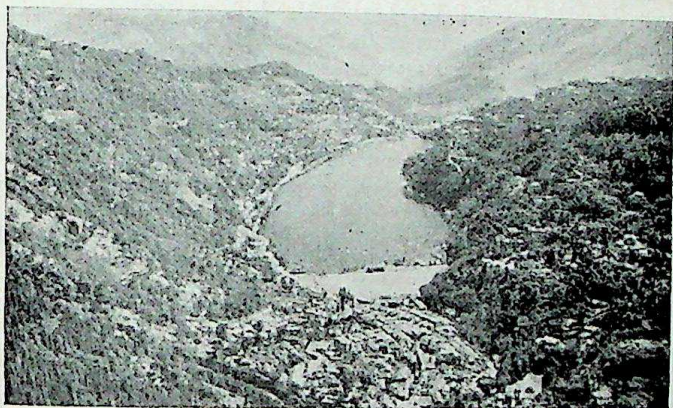
There are no hotels at Chakrata. Accommodation may, however, be arranged at the Forest Dak Bungalow by prior correspondence with the Forest Department.

CLIMATE :—

Though, undoubtedly, one of the healthiest places of India, absence of regular transport from Dehra Dun is a great handicap. For private motors too the hill road upward of Kalsi is clearly risky for those not fully conversant with it.

NAINITAL

Just as Pahalgam in Kashmir is the valley of 12 peaks, since 12 lofty peaks completely enclose the little valley of Pahalgam, Nainital too may rightly be called the lake of 7 peaks. Seven sky-kissing peaks enclose the lovely Nainital lake.



Bird's Eye View, Nainital.

A road borders the lake throughout and the hill sides slope up from this road on all sides. Lovely roads have been laid out on the hill sides on which stand stately mansions often within spacious grounds. The hills are fully clothed with deodars and poplars. The beautiful lake surrounded by green hills, studded with numerous mansions, presents a charming prospect.

The rail road from either Lucknow or Bareilly takes one to Kathgodam railhead. Comfortable state buses await the visitor here and the next 22 miles of hill drive pass over one of the loveliest hill roads in India.

The motor journey terminates at the very edge of the lake, always brimful with clear water, bearing on her bosom scores of pretty pleasure boats. The view enthralls the new-comer. The altitude of Nainital is about 7,000 ft.

The main road of the town is on the right bank of the lake. This one-mile road is the Mall, linking the two localities of Tallital and Mallital at each end. All the elegant shops, main hotels, etc., stand against the hill on this road leaving the water-front open. Lovely willows on the water's edge stoop gracefully over the lake. Mallital is more aristocratic. Tallital, though less elegant, is quite busy. Cycle rickshaws, which in a Himalayan hill station are a novelty indeed, ply night and day on this busy and beautiful thoroughfare.

The hub of Nainital is the "flats" which is a big piece of level ground at the Mallital end of the lake. Imagine a full-sized football or hockey ground, a good-sized exhibition going on, a children's park, a band stand and a fountain promenade, all comfortably accommodated on the plot. Other amusements too, such as, a couple of Cinema Houses, Skating Ring, Bars, etc., have all sprung up here making a visit to the "flats" a pleasant "must" to the visitor for the evening. There is the Hindu temple of Naini Devi at the lake side from which Nainital evidently got its name and a gurdwara and a mosque stand in the neighbourhood. Of the buildings, pride of place justly goes to the Raj Bhawan with its lovely garden and spacious golf course. Next come the large European residential schools—St. Joseph, St. Mary's Convent, All Saints Boys and Girls School and the two Colleges—Government College and Birla College. The Secretariat building, too, is worth mention.

As already stated, Nainital is remarkable for its peaks a few of which have roads leading to the top and may be comfortably negotiated on horse back or on foot.

Cheena peak, the loftiest, is 8,596 ft. high. Sunrise from this peak is famous. There is a rest-house at the top meant for stay overnight. A splendid view of the snow-capped Nanda Devi and Trisul can be had from here. Nanda Devi is 25,615 ft. in height.

Almost a similar view may be had from Snow-view, Tiffin Top and Laria Kanta. Snow-view is nearer while Laria Kanta is some distance away and closer to the snow line.

Land's End is an excellent vantage point. The hill side drops abruptly here to the plains. Khurpa Tal Lake can be seen from here and looks just a pond.

Pleasant excursions may be arranged to Bhimtal and Naukuchia Tal Lakes. The Road is *via* Bhowali, which is 7 miles away, and is noted for its T. B. Sanatorium.

Bhimtal Lake, with a small well-maintained island in it, is very pretty. It is longish in shape, like the Nainital Lake, but 870 ft. longer. Being on a lower level than Nainital, the water is warmer in these two lakes and more suitable for swimming. Bhimtal is a popular picnic spot for visitors to Nainital or Bhowali.

Naukuchia Tal is $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles further down. The lake is irregular in shape and runs into nine creeks from which it derives its name.

Any account of Nainital will be incomplete without mention of the lovely yachts on the lake. For those who cannot participate in this very enjoyable pastime, for its expensiveness or otherwise, even watching the white sails gracefully cruising swan-like on the waters is sufficiently interesting. In summer season, yacht race is arranged daily by the Yacht Club, the race round the lake taking about an hour and starting excitingly with the bang of a miniature cannon.

Even without the yachts, the surface of the lake with its quick changing hues is quite pretty to watch—

“Like fair sister of the sky unruffled doth the blue lake lie.”

At night the beauty enhances hundred-fold when the electric lights in the roads and buildings all around the lake get lighted up and are reflected on the waters. These and the coloured lights, so tastefully set on the parapet at the water's edge, create a veritable fairyland.

With all the foregoing one has to admit that "night life" of Nainital is not half so thrilling, for those who desire it, as in Mussoorie. But Nainital with its excellent rowing and swimming facilities, countless ponies ready-saddled for trek on the hills, the excellent hill tops commanding charming snow-view and especially the sports in the heart of the place, makes an enviable holiday spot for active youths of any land.

PLACES OF INTEREST :

The 7 snow peaks round about Nainital are :—

- | | | | |
|-------------------------------|-----|-----|------------|
| 1. Cheena Peak | ... | ... | 8,569 ft. |
| 2. Alma | ... | ... | 7,980 ft. |
| 3. Sher Ka Danda | ... | ... | 7,890 ft. |
| 4. Larya Kanta | ... | ... | 8,144 ft. |
| 5. Ayar Patta or Dorothy Seat | ... | ... | 7,640 ft. |
| 6. Handi Bundi | ... | ... | 71,150 ft. |
| 7. Deopatta or Camel's back | ... | ... | 7,990 ft. |

Kilbury, about 5 miles from Nainital, is in the midst of thick forest. The forest Dak Bungalow is ideal for picnic and shikar.

EXCURSIONS :

Besides Bhowali, Bhimtal and Naukuchia Tal, already mentioned, excursions may be arranged also to the following :—

1. *Sat Tal*—The group of seven small lakes, nearly 3 miles from Bhimtal, is worth visiting, especially for the Ashram there of the reputed American Missionary Rev. Stanley Jones.

2. *Khurpa Tal*—About 3 miles away is ideal for fishing.

3. *Ramgarh*—A beauty spot on the Nainital-Mukteswar Road, 16 miles from Nainital. Accommodation may be reserved in advance in P. W. D. and District Board Dak Bungalows. It is famous for fine orchards and snow-view.

4. *Mukteswar*—About 35 miles from Nainital, it is noted for the Veterinary Research Institute of the Government of India and the fine panoramic view of perpetual snow.

5.° *Bhabar and Hailey Park*—The wide Bhabar area is at the foot of the hills and has fine wild game sport. The game sanctuary at Hailey Park near Ramnagar is one of the largest and best wild life sanctuaries in North India.

CLIMATE :

Nainital has the two usual seasons—spring and autumn—but the spring season (April to June) is more popular and gayer. Temperature never goes beyond 85° F. In Autumn the maximum is 60°F. There is snow-fall in January.

HOTELS AND LODGING :

Nainital is well provided with nice, elegant hotels. The Grand, Waldorf and Metropole are the topmost. Next come Melville, Elphinstone, Silverton, Everest, etc. The Y. M. C. A. is quite comfortable but has no single-seated rooms. Dormitory arrangement exists at Rs. 6-50 only per day for boarding and lodging. The food is excellent. It is open to all. There are a few family suites too which are almost always booked even from the previous season. The Y. W. C. A. caters for ladies.

LIBRARY :

The English Library and Reading Room on the side of the lake is very well run and is quite popular.

RANIKHET

Thirty miles beyond Nainital is Ranikhet. The route is *via* Bhowali which may be reached straight from Kathgodam as well. With a steady rise upto Bhowali, the road descends. Down and down it goes till river Kosi is reached at the tiny locality of Garampani. The altitude being only 3,000 ft. water here is pleasantly warm as compared to that in Nainital, hence the strange name of Garampani for the spot.

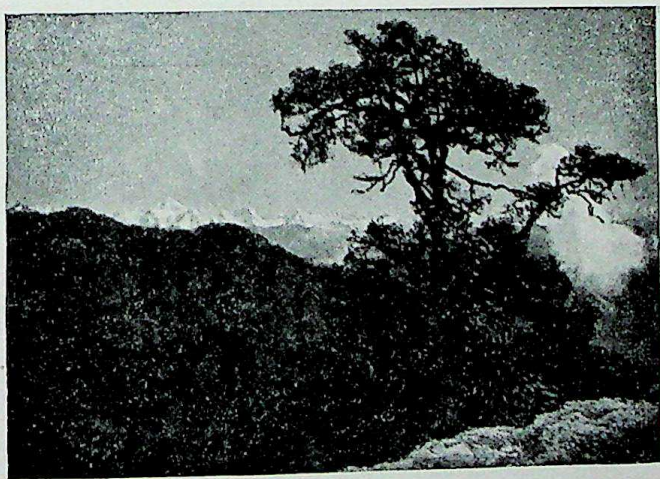
Beyond the steel bridge over the river, the road rises again uninterruptedly for 3,000 ft. more upto Ranikhet. The monotonous cactus and nondescript shrubs are suddenly replaced by crowds of young pine trees with their beautiful tops spread out like peacock feathers.

The town of Ranikhet is of recent growth—being a creation of the British. A gentle slope covered all over with pines descends on two sides of the hill. Such an extent of semi-level ground at the height of 6,000 ft. is also quite rare. The air is drier and healthier than that at Nainital. The annual rainfall is only 50 inches against 110 inches of Nainital! The drinking water too is better here. All these tempted Lord Mayo, Viceroy of India, to think of shifting India's Summer Capital from Simla to Ranikhet. But the scheme did not materialise. In 1869 it was selected to be the summer station for British troops instead and grew up as such.

Beautiful bungalows have been built in higher and higher slopes with least disturbance to natural scenery of the place. The gradient of the roads has been so regulated that each house can be reached by car. The Mall, which is the main road of the town, has been beautified with flower beds, flower pots, etc. Big tubs of hydrangia are to be seen everywhere.

Chaubuttia, which is 6,942 ft. high and 6 miles above Ranikhet, has a hill depot for the Army and a fruit research garden of the U. P. Government.

Ranikhet is very sparsely populated and appears almost like a deserted town but for the mile-long Bazar Road. There are plenty of shops of all kinds here, including some quite elegant ones too, and a nice little market. There are a few Indian style hotels such as the Himalaya Hotel and Snow View Hotel on this road. But the two European style hotels—Norton's and Rosemount—are on the Mall Road. It is strange that these two hotels are costlier than even the best in Nainital.



Snow View from Ranikhet.

The main attraction of Ranikhet is its unique snow-view. The whole length of about 200 miles of everlasting snow stretching from West Nepal & Tehri Garhwal is visible on the north in most parts of the year.

UP State Museum, Lucknow

On this stand out ten world famous Himalayan peaks in succession and the following are eight of them :—

Nilkanta ... (21,640 ft.)	Nanda Ghunti (21,286 ft.)
Kamet ... (25,447 ft.)	Trisul ... (22,260 ft.)
Gauri Parbat (22,027 ft.)	Nanda Devi (25,645 ft.)
Hathi Parbat (22,060 ft.)	Nandakot ... (22,580 ft.)

Justice Douglas of the Supreme Court of the U.S.A. has described it as "the finest beauty spot in the world".

The noted Socialist leader of England, Mr. Aneurin Bevan, says, "The sight of the Himalayas from the verandah of a mountain lodge above Ranikhet was all I could wish for and more. I was almost seduced from my old allegiance to my favourite view of the Black Mountains & Brecknock Beacons above Tredegar Hills in Wales. All the peaks of the Himalayas unfolded their chaste white loveliness before us with the exception of Mount Everest."

One may easily imagine the various changes of colour and beauty that take place in this unique show-piece of the world from early morn to nightfall. Words fail to describe this enthralling pageant. In moonlit nights, it is unforgettable. Even the most materialistically-inclined must be tempted at times to mystic heights unawares.

OTHER PLACES OF INTEREST :

1. *Golf Course*—About 3 miles from the town on the main route to Almora, situated in the midst of pine forest with a commanding snow view, it is beautiful beyond words.

2. *Bhaloo Dam* has a lovely lake.

3. *Tarikhet*—Prem Vidyalaya here for Cottage Industries and technical education is well worth a visit.

EXCURSIONS :

1. *Nainital & Almora*—Ranikhet is central both to Nainital and Almora, being only 37 and 30 miles away, respectively. So one staying at Ranikhet may easily visit these two important places.

2. *Pindari Glacier* (13,000 ft.)—It is a world famous beauty spot and is slightly over 100 miles *via* Garur (57 miles).

3. *Tapoban*—It is about 13 miles by bridle path *via* Garur.

4. *The Valley of Flowers*—This richest flower valley in the world is only 28 miles from Tapoban.

5. *Badrinath and Kedarnath*—There is a route from here to Karnaprayag for both these sacred shrines of Hindus.

CLIMATE :

The most interesting point about Ranikhet's temperature is that even in winter it does not go below 30°F. and consequently there is little snow fall with its attendant inconveniences. The elevation here, being only 6,000 ft., is more suitable for retired people than that of other higher stations.

Moreover, the rainy season here is not at all unpleasant. Not only is the average annual rainfall only 50" but continuous rains are rare. The weather clears up very quickly.

HOTELS AND LODGING :

Besides the hotels already mentioned, there are nice Bungalows available for hire even in the higher reaches.

DARJEELING

Simla, Mussoorie, Shillong and Ooty, each claims to be the queen of hill stations in India. Indeed each has its uniqueness. But Darjeeling is easily a class apart, specially because of the matchless view of Kanchenjunga which shines as a diadem on the crown that is Darjeeling. Where else is such a gigantic beautiful snow peak visible so near an important town? Apart from Kanchenjunga, what a charmingly beautiful town is Darjeeling, spotlessly clean and every house and each open spot almost a flower show !

About a couple of hour's hop by air from Dum Dum (Calcutta) is Bagdogra airfield. The Airlines station-wagon takes you right upto the foothills at Siliguri without extra charge. Take a taxi and cover the next 52 miles of hill climb feasting your eyes with ever-changing Himalayan panorama in its most lovely luxuriousness or if you are inclined not to miss the famous match-box train from Siliguri, the Darjeeling-Himalayan Railway, performing its hundred tricks—now going backward now forward, now straight now zigzag, and looping the perfect loop within view of the foaming hill torrents, your trouble and expense of the journey will be more than amply compensated.

When you reach Darjeeling you will have the pleasant surprise to find that, instead of a single important level road which is generally found in most other hill stations, here in Darjeeling at least three big semi-level highways run along the whole length of the town almost parallel to one another, and everyone completely motorable. Many houses on these roads have flat concrete roofs instead of the inclined ironsheets as elsewhere. And what beautiful houses have been built by the rich, mostly of Calcutta, and what a wealth of the choicest flowers draping each !

The pine trees in Darjeeling, distributed almost evenly all over the town and decking it, are not the

ordinary Himalayan ones. They are much more beautiful in shape. These are Mexican pines brought from abroad by some enthusiastic English administrator of old, I was told.

All this has given Darjeeling such beauty as will satisfy the most exacting taste. Mention may also be made in this connection of the two beautiful big domes—one at each end of the town—one of the Raj Bhawan and the other of the Burdwan Raj Palace. Built almost similar in shape and proportion in the same blue hue, these two well-shaped domes are like two beautiful earrings adorning the face of a beauty queen.

In natural beauty, Darjeeling surpasses other hill stations. The terraced town looks like a framed picture standing inclined against Jalapahar Hill. There is verdure in abundance everywhere. It is hard to find so many Rhododendron trees in the heart of any other hill station. Fogs in Darjeeling are more profuse and thicker and are not confined to rainy season alone as at other places. To sit for hours on end on the benches around the beautiful Mall Chowrasta, watching the fashion parade going on at all hours of the day steeped in the succession of gathering and scattering fog, is an enjoyable rare experience. It is interesting too to watch the nicely-clad children and young people of both sexes riding on lovely ponies and completing the Mall Road round. Rows and rows of the blue mountain ranges in the north of the Chowrasta, now glistening in sunlight, now hiding behind the mantle of white clouds, or else besmeared all over with patches of white clouds, are also extremely pretty and fascinating.

Of the sights of Darjeeling, Observatory Hill is prominent. It is in front of the Mall Chowrasta. There is the nicely maintained Mahakal temple on top. This is the highest point in the town except Jalapahar. The temple compound is also used as a nice vantage point for viewing on clear days several Himalayan snow peaks at a distance.

Raj Bhawan, just behind Observatory Hill, is surrounded by extensive and lovely lawns.

"Step-aside," once the residence of the great Indian national leader, C. R. Das, where he breathed his last, now used as Child Welfare Centre and a library, is very close to the Mall.

Behind the Raj Bhawan, at a little distance, is Birch Hill, a beautiful picnic spot. It has a children's park and a small herbarium of Darjeeling flowers on top.

The Government College stands nearby. Quite a big college, it has, besides Bengalis, Gurkha students and a number of Bhutia girls in degree classes.

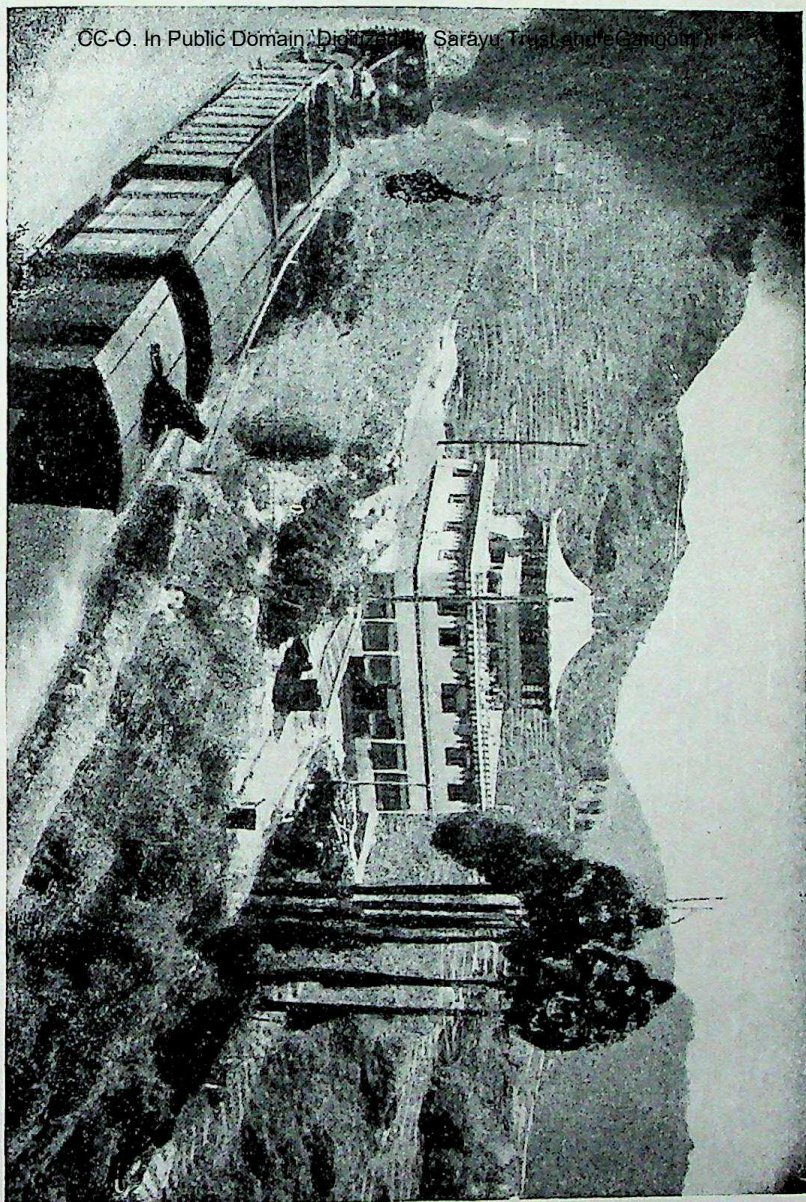
Lebong Race Course is visible down below with the military barracks and a cinema house close by.

The real military centre, however, is on top of Jalapahar hill. The nice road leading to the top is 'Jeepable' throughout and has numerous decent bungalows dotted all along.

St. Paul's school with its wide expanse of ground and quite big buildings occupies a prominent part of the Jalapahar hill. The rest is all military having even a nice playground in the centre.

The altitude of Darjeeling is 6,812 ft. Strangely enough, the earlier railway station, Ghoom, is over 7,000 ft. There is a nice Buddhist temple at Ghoom with images of many noted Tibetan lamas including one of the great Bengali scholar and holy man, Atish Deepankar Sreejnan, who taught Buddhism in Tibet. His statue is a nice tribute of the Tibetan people to a foreigner.

Outside the town the most popular spot is Tiger Hill (8,515 ft.) from where the famous sunrise view of Darjeeling may be had. The first rays of the sun as



The Darjeeling-Himalayan Railway passing a monastery at Ghoom.

they fall on Kanchenjunga turn it into a veritable pillar of light with all the beautiful hues imaginable.

Another beauty spot is the Sinchal Lake. A couple of tanks almost on the top of the hill in idyllic natural surroundings are used for filtering water supplied to the town.

The very neatly designed and well maintained Lloyd's Botanical Garden is a charming spot. The strangely beautiful flower, Bird of Paradise, in the hot-house is a rarity. Darjeeling museum, though small, is also quite interesting.

There are a number of very elegant European style hotels, the chief of which is Mt. Everest Hotel. The building is palatial. The Planters' Club occupies the centre and almost the most prominent site of the town. Of the Indian style hotels, the majority are managed by Bengalis and maintained in passably good standard. Lewis Jubilee Sanitarium is the chief of these. Very close to the Railway Station, it occupies quite extensive grounds with lovely lawns and has various amenities including a library and a lecture hall. The place is always in charge of qualified medical man with a view to its sanitary maintenance. The speciality of the Bazar of Darjeeling, apart from its spacious grounds for a hill station of such altitude, consists in the various types of colourful and interesting hill people to be met with either as shop-keepers or purchasers—Gurkhas, Lepchas, Bhutias, etc. The charmingly tall Bhutia ladies, finely dressed in clean flowing garments, smartly managing big up-to-date shops, is quite an attractive sight.

Since the conquest of Mt. Everest, Tenzing's house in Darjeeling has become almost a place of pilgrimage. Mr. Tenzing lives here in a palatial house and grants interviews liberally. The time for interview is noted at the gate and varies according to the day of the week.

But the chief attraction of Darjeeling is the play of the clouds over the streets and buildings night and day.



Everest Conqueror family, Darjeeling.

They will enter your room through the open windows and spoil your clothes. The clouds combined with the beautiful flowers everywhere in the beautiful city, watched over by the fairy-like Kanchenjunga, make Darjeeling a real queen indeed with all the rich and comely decorations of a queen.

PEAKS :

The Himalayan snow peaks, visible on a clear day from Darjeeling, besides Kanchenjunga, are Kabru and Pandin.

From Tiger Hill, the glorious view of Mount Everest (29,141 ft.), the topmost point on earth, may also be had.

EXCURSIONS :

1. *Happy Valley Tea Garden*—very near Darjeeling.
2. *Lopchu Tea Garden*—Beyond Happy Valley Garden, on the road to Kalimpong, is the famous Lopchu Garden.
3. *Kalimpong*—This attractive and now politically famous hill station is only 30 miles from Darjeeling. One may reach it by motor on any day and return the same day. There is no bus service. The journey, which in the major part is steep descent, is enthralling.
4. *Kurseong*—This is another fine hill station, about half way on the route from Siliguri, and may also be conveniently reached from Darjeeling.

LIBRARY :

The Library of English and Bengali books in Stepaside is open to the public.

CLIMATES :

Although almost of the same altitude as Simla, Nainital or Mussoorie, it is peculiar that in Darjeeling

there is hardly any snow-fall. In the rainy season, there is very heavy downpour. This, the all pervading fog and the absence of sunshine for days together make the place intolerably dull during rains.

For quick change of health, there is hardly any other hill station comparable to Darjeeling.

HOTELS AND LODGINGS :

Besides Mount Everest and Planters' Club, already mentioned, there are Bellevue and Carlton hotels in excellent European style. Good Indian hotels are Central, Hindu Boarding, India Hotel, Snow View, etc.

SHILLONG

Prior to the Second Great War, Assam's capital, beautiful Shillong, was but a name to most people from the rest of India. Activities in the Eastern Frontier during the War brought many to Shillong or places near about. Lack of easy communication made it practically inaccessible to many. Moreover, it is in such a distant corner of this vast sub-continent that it is a far cry from most parts of India.

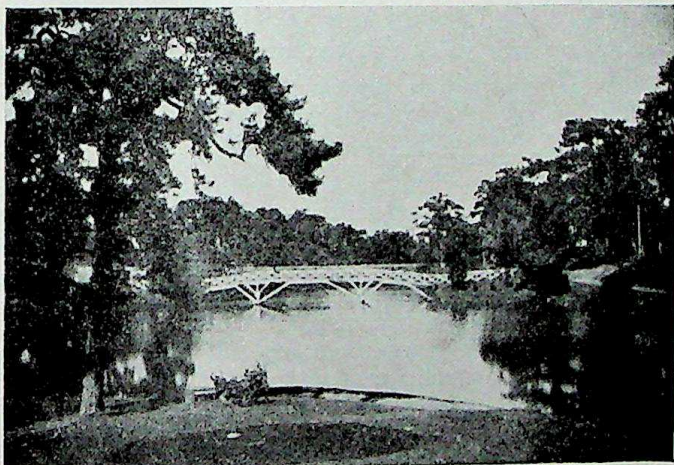
But Shillong on the Khasi Hills is a unique charming spot and is quite different from other Indian hill stations. Veteran sojourners of Indian hill stations are almost taken by surprise at the unexpected beauty of this pretty place when visiting it for the first time.

The Himalayan hill stations are all perched precariously on the steep slopes of the hills, whereas Shillong sits four-square on the extensive level plateau of the Khasi Hills. Once you end the motor climb by the 61 miles of beautiful hill road from Gauhati, you will forget that you are on a height. The slight undulations of the town are hardly more than what is found in such a plain station as Dehra-Dun and this adds to its charm. Only a small part of the town, Laban, is at an elevation. Otherwise all is flat—only the blue hills of Upper Shillong and Cherapunji are visible at a distance.

Not only do scores of big taxis wait for you at the Police Bazar which is the junction of as many as seven roads and which is the hub of the town, but there are also several extensive bus routes. The longest one from Barabazar to Happy Valley is as much as 7 miles long. But how thinly populated and built up is Shillong! Plenty of grass lawns are on every side with rippling brooks and watercourses here and there. Charming knolls with pretty bunches of pine trees, with the lovely Shillong Lake in heart of the place, complete the picture of a story book fairy land. No wonder that Tagore chose Shillong as the background for his leveliest idealistic romance, *Shesher Kabita* (The Last Poem).

The Assam Link is the only Railway to take one to Gauhati from where one has to go by road. The Sylhet-Shillong road route has been discontinued since the creation of Pakistan. The road from Gauhati is excellently broad and has fewer sharp bends than the road routes to any of the Himalayan hill stations. The midway halt is at Nongpu which is a beautifully open place with a nice restaurant.

Strangely enough, as the journey ends the Khuds on either side of the road seem to fill up fast and at last when Shillong is reached the hills and Khuds are all forgotten.



The Lake, Shillong.

The two main beauty spots of Shillong are the Lake, already mentioned, and the Golf Link. The Race Course comes as a close third. The lake is skirted all round by a ribbon like red pathway with flower beds throughout. A white painted wooden bridge in the centre of the long lake enhances its beauty.

The Golf Link is not only reputed to be the second largest in Asia, but the charming scenery of lovely dense pine forests surrounding it makes it decidedly one of the best beauty spots of India. In point of beauty it seems to surpass even the Gulmarg Golf Course in Kashmir, but the latter has its unique value as one of the few natural golf courses in the world.

The Race Course is in a narrow valley surrounded on all sides by pine-covered uplands. The Grandstand with the nice flower garden in front is very pretty.

The Bara Bazar is at the other end of the town and is noted for its bevy of Khasia lady shop-keepers.

Robert's Hospital, not far from Bara Bazar, is run by American Missionaries and is famed throughout Assam for its first-rate Surgeon, Dr. Hughes.

There is another quite big civil hospital also.

Lait Mukrah is the aristocratic locality of Shillong and is lovely in its neatness, nicely built private and public buildings and nice churches. Three of the colleges in Shillong, *viz.* St. Mary, St. Anthony and St. Edmund, are located here. The famous Don Bosco School with its picturesque building is also to be found here. The Ramakrishna Mission centre too is in this locality and is housed in its own beautiful building.

Shillong may justly be proud of some of its beautiful office buildings, the foremost of which is the Secretariat. This is a newly constructed building in cement concrete in very attractive and up-to-date design.

Hotels in Shillong are numerous. Pine Hotel and Peak Hotel are run on European lines and are the costliest. Of the Indian Hotels, the majority are run by Bengalees, *e.g.*, Sunny View, Tiptop, Tripti, Calcutta Hotel, Pine View, Ramakrishna Hotel, etc. Delhi Hotel and Anand Hotel are run by North Indians.

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 Shillong is unique for its waterfalls and most of these are quite close to the town. The Crenoline Fall is in the heart of the town and has a nice swimming bath attached. The Sati Fall is close to the Race Course. The two very beautiful Falls—Bishop and Beadon—are close to each other near the town and are situated in very picturesque surroundings. The Elephant Fall, which is quite a big Fall and descends in three cascades midst luxuriant forest scenery, is in Upper Shillong, about 7 miles away from the town.

No account of Shillong will be complete without mention of the attractive Khasia people, whose home it is, and their great love of flowers. The Khasis are a merry peace-loving people. The most curious thing about them is that it is their women who have the upperhand both in home and society so much so that the daughters rather than the sons inherit property and the youngest of the daughters, the most. There are more women shop-keepers than men and the English educated ones are employed in offices in large numbers. The outsiders, European and Indian, who have Khasia wives are found to lead very pleasant family life. Love of flowers of the Khasia is proverbial. The houses of even the poorest Khasia will be found surrounded by flowers. In fact, Shillong, hardly less than Darjeeling, is a land of flowers. Beautiful Dahlias and Rhododendrons are to be found almost everywhere.

There are plenty of fruits too in Shillong—peaches, plums, pears, papiya and, most of all, surprisingly large pine-apples. These are plentiful and cheap.

Thus, Shillong is the land of charm and beauty. Not only is there absence of heat in summer, but the cold in winter is also milder than in other Himalayan hill stations. This makes Shillong a coveted place for all the year round residence. In fact, if any place outside Kashmir reminds one strongly of that Valley of Beauty, it is Shillong. Curiously enough, both happen to be at the same altitude, *viz.*, 5,000 ft !

EXCURSIONS :

The most important place for a visit outside Shillong is Cherapunji, 30 miles away, connected by regular bus service, until recently the world's wettest (*i.e.*, rainiest) spot.

Next comes Upper Shillong, only a few miles from the town, also connected by bus.

LIBRARY :

The Government Public Library in Police Bazar has a rich collection of English, Assamese, Bengalee and Khasia books and is open to the public.

HOTELS AND LODGINGS :

Pinewood Hotel is the most aristocratic hotel on European lines, situated in lovely surroundings by the side of Ward Lake.

Of those in Indian style, Delhi Hotel and Anand Hotel cater for North Indians, while Tripti Hotel, Calcutta Hotel, Ramkrishna Hotel, etc., are suitable for Bengalees.

KOHIMA

Kohima is the headquarters of the Naga Hills in Assam and is also the solitary town in the area. It is only 30 miles by road from Manipur Road railway station (Dimapur of World War II) in Assam. The road proceeds onward to distant Imphal, capital of Manipur State, another 70 miles away. This lengthy road was the lifeline of India's defence during the War with Japan and was therefore maintained by the British in an efficient manner. The road winds beautifully round innumerable green-mantled hills, often of great height, and full of dense forest and a good part companioned by an impetuous hill stream. It is one of the most beautiful road journeys in India, much more colourful and romantic than even the beautiful Ranchi-Hazaribagh Road.

The road gradually ascends about 4,000 ft. at Kohima, bypasses it and goes on. The journey is risky, not only because of the Naga hamlets and villages, but for tigers and other wild life. The buses or other conveyances on the road are so few and far between that, should an unfortunate breakdown happen, especially towards the evenings, safety of life from wild animals is remote indeed.

Even before the Naga troubles, visitors to Kohima had to be equipped with previous permission from the Dy. Commissioner there for entry. The main road of the Kohima town branches off at right angles from the bus route. At the junction is a nice little triangular flower garden having a stone column in the middle with the inscription—

“ Here invasion of India by
Japan was halted, March 1943.”

So this is the spot where the blood of Netaji's devoted troops—Hindu, Muslim, Sikh & Christian—mingled together for the sake of India's freedom. Hallowed is this spot!

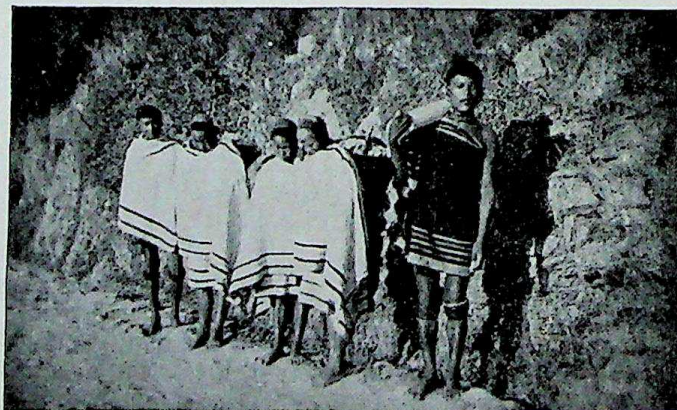
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It is interesting that just on the opposite side of the road is an extensive and imposing cemetery of British troops who fell in the fight. In front of it runs the prominent inscription :

“ Tell them when you go home that we have given our to-day for their to-morrow.”

What a memorable place is Kohima—one of the dramatic turning points of history—both for the East and the West! The future of countless generations was made or marred at this spot.

The road to the town passes by the Dak Bungalow and some other public buildings on raised ground and enters the shopping centre of Kohima. Unimpressive wooden houses, mostly double storeyed, on both sides of the solitary road with shops of all kinds on the ground-floor is Kohima Bazar. The shops belong mostly to Assamese and Manipuris with a sprinkling of Naga shops. The Nagas are generally in their native costume with their heads partly shaved off in fantastic patterns. In a few modern style shops, the Naga shop-keepers are found nicely dressed in European style. Purchasers, too, vary from the most primitive to the most sophisticated Naga ladies and gents in full



Nagas at Kohima.

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European dress. What seems curious to the visitor is that all the varying types mix so freely without any reserve or complex.

The modernising influence of Christian missionary education is evidently noticeable in the Europeanised Nagas. But Hindu influence is noticeable too, especially in a tribe of Nagas with well knotted tuft of hair on the head and nicely oiled and bathed like the Hindu priest.

After the shopping areas come the residential houses—very simple affair these, with a weaving loom practically in front of every home. The dress of the primitive Nagas consists mostly of a pair of black-coloured sheets with broad orange borders—one skirts round the waist and the other is slung over one shoulder. The Kohima High School has as many as 600 students of whom not more than a hundred are children of Indians employed there. The rest are all Nagas. Among the teachers, Assamese and Bengalis predominate.

There is a club in the official locality with indoor games, newspaper, etc., frequented mostly by Indians—Bengalees, Assamese, Punjabis, etc., who are defence employees, teachers, etc.

The Nagas have a strong association of their own, as evidenced by the notices in English of meetings, etc., found posted at several places about the town.

The Nagas are generally fair-complexioned, almost reddish, with a mixture of Aryan & Mongolian features. The nose is mostly Aryan. Both sexes possess excellent health. Kohima enjoys a cool and bracing climate.

There are plenty of flowers. During the Japanese occupation of Burma, many evacuee Indians migrating into India overland *via* Kohima were overwhelmed by the mass of beautiful flowers of Kohima when returning to the land of their birth.

CHERAPUNJI

Thirty-three miles beyond Shillong, at a lower level, is Cherapunji, known to every school boy throughout the world as having the distinction of being the wettest place in the world, though this unique position is now being attempted to be wrested away not only by the little tribal village, Mawsynram, a few miles away, but also by a spot in Hawaii islands in the Pacific Ocean.

There is a bus service from Shillong and one may reach there and return the same day. The altitude of Cherapunji is 4,500 ft. against 5,000 of Shillong. For the first 20 miles, the hill road winding through Khasi villages is uneventful, but, thereafter, thick white clouds, as if emanating from the pitcher of the genii of the Arabian Nights, all but completely cover the road. The Khud side of the road, from which the clouds rise, is steep and precipitate. The low parapet protecting that side of the road is so undependable or nonexistent at places that the drive on the road is highly risky at every step. A single wrong turn of the steering wheel or slight lack of control of the machinery is sure to land one to imminent disaster.

The bus terminus is at Upper Chera, a locality with unpretentious houses. A large, square, high plot of ground is almost in the centre where the weekly *hât* (i.e., market) is held. This is quite an elaborate affair, the shop-keepers being predominately women. There is a hotel sector too, where cooked eatables are sold. Bacon preparations seem to be most popular. Even burnt whole pigs and burnt big fish are sold.

The Ramakrishna Mission on Upper Chera has a big school for Khasi children. Boys and girls learn together at all stages. Vocational education, according to the bent of the Khasias, rather than mere literary education, is given more importance here.

There is a Ropeway functioning here, viz., the Cherapunji-Chhatak Ropeway. Chhatak is in Pakistan now. Owing to the uneven terrain beyond Chera, the Ropeway facilitates considerably the movement of goods, especially Indian stones for cement making in Pakistan. A mile or so away is Lower Chera, full of grass lawns, undulating grounds and beautiful bungalows. How different and pleasant is Lower Chera! Big church compounds are seen here and there, the biggest housing a Divinity College.

On one side, the land drops suddenly to about 4,000 ft. below, almost to sea level. The view of the Sylhet plains below this escarpment is simply marvellous!

The Mosmai waterfall, a little ahead, rushes down with tremendous force and is lost in masses of spray rising up from the depths. The unbroken sound of the massive falling water is a constant background to all speech and sound of Lower Chera.

The most remarkable sight here is the cave or grotto on the hill a few miles away. It is almost dark inside. One is apt to get lost in the labyrinthine lanes formed inside by fantastic stone and lavalike formations.

It is curious that, although it rains so heavily in Cherapunji for most parts of the year, the inhabitants go about their business in total unconcern protected only by a big palm leaf hat. It is said that getting drenched in Cherapunji rains does not do any harm even to the weakest constitution. This seems to call for an investigation.

The average annual rainfall of Cherapunji is 450 inches. There was the record rainfall of 905 inches in 1861. The highest rainfall recorded in the rest of India is, perhaps, that at Mahabaleswar in Bombay of 292 inches.

One is apt to think that it rains every day in the year in Cherapunji. But it is not so. The total number of rainy days there is 166 against 212 in Duala (in equatorial Africa), but the amount of rain there is less than half of Chera. The rainfall varies considerably from month to month.

January 0.75", February 2.11", March 7.27", April 26.23", May 50.41", June 105.05", July 96.34", August 70.00", September — October 19.42", November 2.90", December 0.49".

Thus, November and December are almost free from rain. These months must, hence, be delightful there.

CLIMATE :

In spite of the terrific rainfall, there is hardly any malaria or any other disease. People look quite healthy and are always gay and active.

HOTELS AND LODGINGS :

There are practically no tourist facilities. Thus, visitors are generally compelled to return to Shillong on the very day of the visit.

RANCHI

Ranchi is the summer headquarters of the State of Bihar. Since the summer headquarters of most other States are regular hill stations such as Nainital, Darjeeling, Simla, etc., Ranchi may well be imagined to be the same too. But it is not at all so. It is almost a plain station.

The altitude of Ranchi is only 2,069 ft. which is about the same as that of Dehra Dun which is 2,100 ft. high.

Ranchi and Dehra Dun have also other similarities. Temperature in summer is about the same and some of the main vegetation is similar too, particularly lichi fruits and magnolia flowers.

There are two shapely hills on the outskirts of the town—Ranchi hill to the west and Morabadi hill to the north. These and the Ranchi lake have added much to the charm of the place. There is a temple on top of Ranchi hill and nicely built steps lead up to it. The view of the town from the temple is charming.

The lake is just at the foot of the hill with a couple of small islands in it. Hill, lake and the islands make the spot beautiful, especially during sunset. The lake is contiguous with the town. A lake so close to the town is a rarity.

Morabadi Hill marks the northern extremity of the far-flung town. A nice house, built almost on the top of it, is reputed to have been the residence of Jyotirindra Nath Tagore, an elder brother of Poet Tagore. A more romantic site for a house is hard to find. The Ramakrishna Ashram built recently almost at the foot of the hill has made the locality popular.

The T.B. Sanatorium of Ramakrishna Mission in Ranchi is 8 miles away from the town. It is growing
UP State Museum, Lucknow

up by leaps and bounds and is doing commendable work under the devoted guidance and service of the Swamijis.

Ranchi is an extensive, open and neat town. Just as one steps out of the railway station, the beautiful lawns with nice roads and the lovely bungalows of S. E. Rly. Hotel, Mount Hotel, Midland Hotel and Grand Hotel—all within flower gardens—satisfy the newcomer. The nice Holiday Home recently built for S. E. Rly. employees on the other side of the station, with children's park in front, is also a pleasant sight.

In a few minutes the Main Road is reached. This is the shopping centre of the town. The width of the road, which is shaded in most parts by ancient trees, is pleasing. Barabazar, which is the wholesale market, has, of course, its usual crowded shops, narrow lanes and big houses of Marwari merchants.

The weekly *hât* (or market) close to Barabazar is an elaborate affair. Besides the usual vegetable, fish or meat shops, there are quite big sections for miscellaneous goods like readymade garments, shoes, cloth, grain, wickerwork, fowls and other livestock, and even a section for cows, buffaloes and sheep.

Of the residential areas, the old ones such as Old Commissioner's Compound, Tharpakna, etc., have become congested. New ones are, therefore, springing up almost on all sides of the town.

The two new localities of Anantapur and Nibaranpur, close to the Railway Station, are pretty.

Lalpur at the northern end of the town is the aristocratic locality. Rows of lovely houses surrounded by lovely gardens on both sides of a circular road—that is Lalpur. The palatial house of Sir R. N. Mukherjee of Calcutta is here too.

Not satisfied even with these nice open localities, the rich, mostly of Calcutta, are building attractive houses in Kanke which is practically outside the town on the road to the lunatic Asylum.

The Lunatic Asylum of Ranchi, some 3 miles away, is widely known. It is very extensive and has three separate sections for Indian men and women and Europeans, respectively, and is well worth a visit.

The official localities of Ranchi are Doranda and Hinu. There is also the small military area clustering round the lovely parade ground close to them. The stone-built Secretariat building in Doranda is quite picturesque. Behind this are quarters of the Secretariat employees.

About a furlong beyond is Hinu full of Government Quarters too, mostly of the employees of A.G., Bihar. The A.G.'s Office, too, is here.

This part of Ranchi is very neat. The small Doranda lake, on one side, adds much to its beauty. The weekly *hât* at Doranda is quite big and self-contained.

One peculiar characteristic of Ranchi is the activity, almost all over the town, of Christian missionaries. Big churches and schools, with their extensive playgrounds, etc., occupy quite a large part of the place. The St. Xavier's College here has an imposing building and is very popular. Similar is the case with St. Paul's school and many other missionary boys and girls schools. Many aboriginal boys and girls receive education. No wonder they have turned Christians in their hundreds.

Fine healthy climate, absence of oppressive heat in summer, wide open vistas, pretty hills, pleasantly undulating roads, lovely paddy fields coming right into urban localities, unsophisticated aboriginals full of

health and charm, lovely lichis and giant papya fruits and eatables of all kinds make Ranchi a coveted spot.



Hundru Fall, Ranchi.

PLACES OF INTEREST :

Hundru Fall—Of the places of interest in and about Ranchi, the foremost is the Hundru Fall, 28 miles away. It is a big waterfall dropping from a great height. It is difficult to have a good view of the fall from the top. Descending down over big rocks is also very risky. No wonder that fatalities take place almost every year. There is a rest house for visitors.

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Jona Fall, recently renamed Gautam Dhara, is not far from Gautam Dhara Railway Station, a few stations before Ranchi. The fall is much smaller than Hundru. The Birlas have constructed here a nice Dharamshala with a marble statue of Lord Buddha. It is an ideal picnic spot.

Namkum is one railway station before Ranchi. Though a small place, it is neat and clean being a cantonment. It has the Lac Research Institute also and is reputed to be healthier than Ranchi.

Lohardaga is the terminus of the metre gauge railway which is a few miles beyond Ranchi. It is a small healthy township known for its Aluminium Mine.

Netarhat, over a thousand feet higher than Ranchi, in the forest area, is some distance away. It has hundreds of species of birds and animals.

CLIMATE :

Although during the summer months Ranchi is sufficiently warm, absence of hot winds makes it tolerable even then for visitors from the plains.

Except for 2 to 3 rainy months, it is extremely pleasant throughout and healthy. Outside the hill stations, it is one of the healthiest stations in India.

LIBRARY :

The library of English and Bengali books in the Bengali club in Tharpakhana is very well-stocked and very popular.

HOTELS AND LODGINGS :

The South Eastern Railway Hotel is the topmost hotel here run on European lines.

Next come Grand Hotel, Mount Hotel and Midland Hotel—all close to the railway station—and Hill View and Green View Hotels at the opposite end of the town. There are other hotels too. Although the latter hotels are run on Indian style, they have fine situation and have well-furnished rooms.

PACHMARHI

Perhaps, the least visited hill station in India is Pachmarhi in Madhyapradesh, although it has been the summer headquarters of the old Madhyapradesh and continues to be so of the new Madhyapradesh State. It is a pity that such an attractive place has not received even a tenth of the publicity it so eminently deserves.

Piparya is a small Railway Station in the Jabalpur-Itarsi section (nearer to Itarsi) of Central Railway. Pachmarhi is 32 miles by road from here. The first half is over plain country and the rest is a hill climb through charming scenery. The road, though nicely built and well maintained, is unfortunately rather narrow for simultaneous up and down traffic and there is no 'gate' system for only one way journey. Therefore accidents, which on a hill road are pretty serious affairs, are almost unavoidable.

At one place of this charming road the Khud on one side drops abruptly down and on the opposite side of the narrow gorge the massive rock rises straight for over thousand feet like an old fort wall. It is indeed an imposing and unforgettable sight.

If one is lucky, it is no wonder to see a leopard gazing bewildered at one's car or crossing the path in front. The Madhyapradesh forests have plenty of leopards and tigers.

The road rises to 3,664 ft. within these 16 miles and so it is quite steep at places. But when the outskirts of Pachmarhi are reached, one can hardly imagine that one is on the top of a hill. The typical plain station military cantonment is before him with neat roads with spacious lawns on both sides and military barracks, etc., here and there. Gentle undulation in the grounds, clumps of trees on the mounds, blue mountain peaks visible through the haze on the distant horizon and, most of all, a rambling lake in the middle spanned by three bridges add charm to the scenery. The elevation of 3,500 ft. makes the air cool and refreshing. All this, with absence of traffic, dust and din, makes it a haven of rest and peace.

"But where is the town and where are the people?" the man from the plain is apt to ask. "Oh, the Civil lines are beyond the lake," comes the casual reply.

But that too is more like a big public garden than a town. Here is the Government House, there is the Circuit House, that side is the Rest House, that's the G. P. O. and this lovely bungalow is 'Champak', the Summer Residence of the Chief Minister, and these are the residential bungalows—all standing at a respectable distance from each other on lovely meadows. The bulk of the place is occupied by the sprawling Golf Course, one of the biggest in India, the Government Garden, and the Race Course. The private bungalows do not exceed twenty in number and as many as sixteen of these belong to a single individual, a retired European Engineer. Is this not a unique town—having all the amenities of town life, pipe water and electricity and only a handful of men?

The shops, etc., and homes of the common people are all confined to a little corner of the extensive cantonment, the Sadar Bazar. The most insignificant looking houses, the most unpretentious shops, the dhobi, the shoe-maker, the tailor, the office babu and the teacher are all huddled together in a mass of confused humanity. No meadows, no flower gardens and not even pipe water for them!

A small hillock is visible not far from the Government Garden with five big openings at the top. These are the Pandava Caves reputed to be the dwellings of the Pandava brothers at some stage of their long exile and peregrinations. From these 5 houses, or "marhis" in local dialect, Pachmarhi derives its name. Interesting indeed! How nicely constructed caves—with shapely pillars within and the facade of each one beautifully decorated! What is their age? Who knows? Who made them? The Pundits of the Archeological Department have of course their own views—possibly Buddhist or Jaina caves say they. But Pandava caves are these for the people.

In any case, this is hallowed spot. Not merely these particular caves but the whole area seems to be the chosen

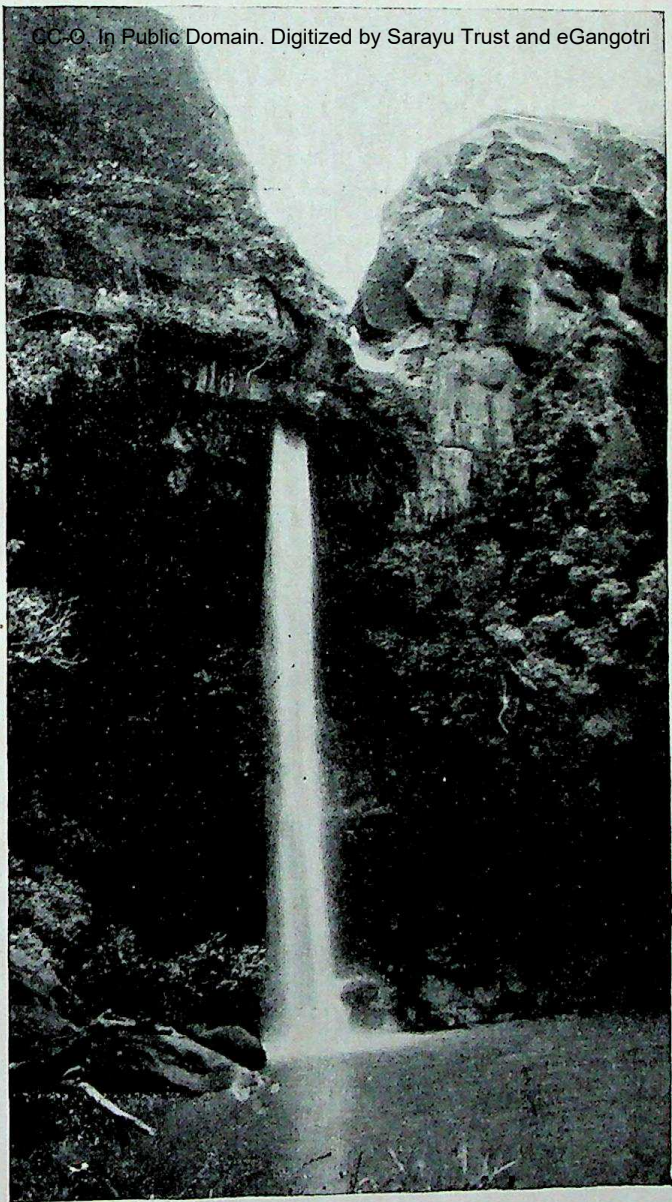
spot of religion in successive generations. One of the mountain tops visible at a distance $5\frac{1}{2}$ miles away is the famous Madhadeo Hill with temple and cave of God Mahadeva. Countless pilgrims from all over India wend their way to the place and each plants an iron trident as an offering to the Lord. That is the custom here. The resultant forest of tridents on the top of the hill is an interesting sight. Quite a big Mela is held during the Shivaratri Festival.

Close to the town is Jatashankar Cave formed by big rush of falling waters from a hill. The stone of the cave ceiling has taken the form of matted hair. From this the place has got its name and sanctity. The cave is reached by climbing down hundreds of feet into the bowels of the earth. It is a very solemn and awe-inspiring sight. A priest performs daily worship.

There is another similar place called Chhota Madhadev not very far away. Indeed, this part of the Satpura Range, known as Mahadeo Hill, is eminently suited for quiet meditation and has evidently been so used from hoary antiquity.

But it is not for this alone or the prettiness of the little town with the Pachmarhi Hill in the background and Dhupgarh and Chowragarh hills at a distance that Pachmarhi deserves publicity. The main attraction of Pachmarhi is the 23 square miles of unique tableland on the edge of which it stands. The rocky plateau is deeply furrowed all over by countless hill streams running beneath shady trees. They have widened out at places creating scores of deep pools of clear running water and the most lovely waterfalls in sequestered woodlands. The pools are ideally suited for swimming in the summer or fishing. Better picnic spots than these can hardly be imagined. Bird and game shooting may also be had.

Shillong is deservedly famous for its waterfalls, but the falls of Pachmarhi are in no way inferior. They are mostly situated in more secluded and romantic spots. Big Fall, Little Fall, Bee Fall and Duchess Fall, each is full of beauty and charm. Big Fall is 350 ft. high!



UP State Museum, Lucknow
Little Fall, Pachmarhi.

Besides the falls, there are as many as 70 beauty spots, locally called 'points' scattered throughout the plateau. Each has a picturesque name given by the British. Recently, Indian names have been substituted but the latter have not yet gained currency. It is hardly possible in this account to describe each 'point' and state its speciality and charm. Some of the names are suggestive of the nature and beauty of the spot. A few of them are enumerated below :—

Mayhew Peep (*Eeshan Shring*).

Kitty Crag (*Sudrishya*).

Sambourne Caves (*Mahadeo Gupha*).

The Catacombs (*Guha Jal*).

Machlika Maur.

Jambu Dwip.

Fanshawe Khud (*Asanna Khud*).

Belle Vue (*Asanna Drishya*).

Dorothy Deep (*Bhrant Neer*).

Saunder's Pool (*Sunder Khud*).

Daisy Khud (*Partidhwani*).

Monte Rosa (*Astachal*).

Do Crag (*Durgam Giri*).

Bundell's Buff (*Vatsalyay*).

Fraser Gully (*Jal Galee*).

Lady Robertson's View (*Giri Darshan*).

Pansy Pool (*Vanshri Vihar*).

Waters Meet (*Sangam*).

Marten's Leap (*Sangam Kudnee*).

The Crevasse (*Sangam Gahwar*).

Crump Crag (*Sushama Sar*).

Keatinge Point (*Sangam Door*).

Landsdowne Point (*Lat Shring*).

Fleetwood Junction (*Agam Trivenee*).

Panorama Hill (*Manoram Giri*).

Best view (*Shailanjali*).

Mount Morris (*Ekant Giri*).

Forsyth Point (*Sudarshan*).

Mayne Rock (*Ajad Shring*).

Malcolm Point (*Chaura Darshan*).

The Bishop's Squeeze (*Giri Darar*).

The Island Rock (*Dweep Shil*).

Fairy Pool (*Apsara Vihar*).

Clematis Point (*Poorva Darshan*).

The Green Patch (*Harectima*).

Picadilly Circus (*Tridhara*).

Irene Pool (*Ramya Kund*).

Is it any wonder that Pachmarhi is known as the 'Trekker's Paradise'? For a batch of enthusiastic young people where else is there in India, besides Kashmir, such a romantic place to combine pleasure with sport to keep them fully occupied for months.

HOTELS AND LODGINGS :

There are no private hotels worth the name in Pachmarhi. There are, of course, Government establishments like the Circuit House and Rest House, meant

mainly for Government Officials. To remove this difficulty, Government have established a beautiful public hotel, known as the 'Block Hotel.' There are beautiful catering arrangements both in Indian and European style. The charges do not exceed Rs. 10/- per head. Private bungalows and a few cottages attached to some bungalows are also available. A few rooms are also available in the Bazar area on moderate rent.

CLIMATE :

Pachmarhi has a salubrious climate throughout the year except in the rainy season. The rains are exceptionally heavy.

One peculiar feature of the place is that it has only one 'season'—the summer—from March to June. Very few go there in the autumn, when most other hill stations are full. In the months of May, June and July, the average mean maximum and minimum temperatures are 95.8°F. & 75.1°F., 87.8°F. & 72°F. and 76.5°F. & 67.8°F., respectively.

OOTACAMUND

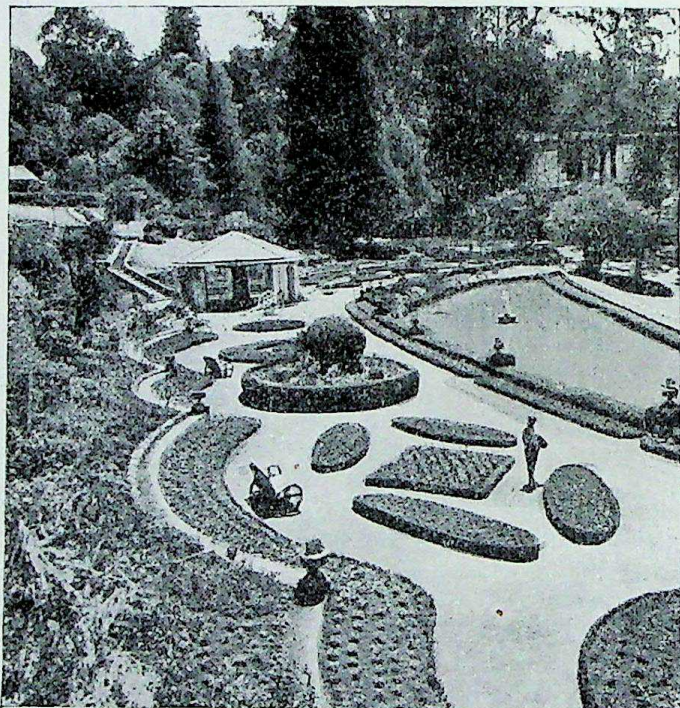
Almost all Southerners claim Ootacamund, commonly known by its contracted name of Ooty, as the queen of hill stations. Indeed, Ooty was, perhaps, the most favourite hill station for Europeans in India. The reason for it, presumably, was its charming climate throughout the year more than its beauty, in spite of its loveliness.

The fugitive summer, the all too brief days of spring and autumn of Europe prevail in Ooty almost all the year round. Neither are the rains so tiring nor the winter so severe here as in most Himalayan hill stations. In spite of its high altitude of over 8,000 ft., there is no snowfall. It is, therefore, free from all the inconveniences connected with snow.

The Nilgiri mountain, almost on the crest of which is Ooty, is a detached eminence surrounded by plain country on all sides—the Madras plains are to the south and the plains of Mysore to the north. So Ooty can be reached from Madras as well as from Mysore.

From Mysore to Ooty is full one hundred miles, the first half of which is over the beautifully clean undulating plains of Mysore and the rest is over the mountain. The hill road of 50 miles is quite good and passes through charming scenery of green foliage and profusion of wild flowers. In the concluding stretch of 10 to 15 miles, the scene changes completely. The woods disappear altogether and the road passes through beautiful lawns stretching up to the horizon on both sides over gently undulating lawns. To Englishmen, this is strongly reminiscent of Sussex downs familiar to all readers of Hardy. Elegant residences of the type of European castles are visible here and there. English cattle with patches of white and black or brown grazing on the lawns complete the picture of the typical English countryside.

At length when Ooty is reached, it is hard to believe that one is in a hill station over 8,000 feet, the highest hill station in India. One rather feels like being inside a beautiful park. The neat bungalows by the side of beautiful roads are all surrounded by lovely gardens.



Botanical Gardens, Ootacamund.

The land gradually rises to the lovely Government House with the Botanical Garden by its side. The garden, though quite small, is one of the prettiest in India. The hothouse in it is a wonder. In the month of May, it is a blaze of colour from floor to ceiling.

Such a mass of bright flowers in so little a space is hard to be found anywhere else.

The main roads of the town converge round a beautiful fountain. This spot is known as Ooty Centre. The Race Course is almost adjacent to the shopping areas and the two markets for meat and vegetables, and not down below like the Annandale in Simla or Lebong race course in Darjeeling.

Only one other hill station in India, *viz.*, Shillong, resembles Ooty in character and layout. Both are tablelands, but Shillong is only 5,000 ft. and Ooty is less crowded.

One side of the Race Course is bounded by a range of high hills on which stand a few stately castles, palaces of the rich.

Not far away, beyond the small railway station, is the oval-shaped Ooty lake with a walk all round.

An account of Ooty will be incomplete without mention of the Toda Colony above the Botanical Garden. The Todas are a dwindling aboriginal tribe which, but for the timely steps taken by the State, would get mixed up completely with the other people of India and be extinct. The few hundreds that still remain have been segregated in a colony in the hills. These people are not so dark as most other aboriginal tribes and many have more Aryan features than Dravidian. They live in houses which are partly underground.

Of the trees in Ooty, besides the usual hill trees like pine, fir, etc., big white-trunked Eucalyptus (the "*blue gum*") is seen everywhere—and hence the name of "*Nilgiris*" (Blue Mountains) to the hills!

The small railway from Mettupaliyam on the Madras side is unique in that the train runs over three rails instead of the usual two. The extra middle rail has series of slots corresponding to the teeth in the middle

wheel. This wheel is normally held up. It is pressed down when needed to act as a brake in steep parts of the track. As the Nilgiris are beautifully covered all over with nice green foliage, travelling by the train is a very nice experience.

Coonoor, almost halfway down on this railway, is a nice small place. Because of lower altitude, it is eminently habitable throughout the year.

All this and, more than all, the weather, which most often according to Englishmen is like fine summer in England, make Ooty a charming place indeed. Is it any wonder that it was a never-to-be forgotten spot for the Britisher in India?

EXCURSIONS :

1. Coonoor—Is on the railway route about 16 miles below Ooty. Has good hotels both in European and Indian styles.

2. Kotagiri—Several tea, coffee, potato and eucalyptus plantains are round about Kotagiri. Distance is 22 miles from Ooty and 21 miles from Matapallyam, connected by good motor roads.

3. Dodabeta—Highest peak in the Nilgiris.

4. Pykara—Noted for Hydro-Electric works.

HOTELS AND LODGINGS :

Savoy Hotel and Hotel Cecil are the best hotels on Western lines. Modern Hindu Hotel and Modern Lodge are decent ones in Indian style.

EUROPEAN CLUBS :

1. Ootacamund Club.
2. Ootacamund Gymkhana Club.
3. Hunt Club.

KODAIKANAL

"If Ooty is the queen of the hill stations, Kodai (the affectionate contraction for Kodaikanal) has been often referred to as a jewel set on the Palni hill"—so runs the municipality's poster near the lake in this picturesque hill resort.

Between Tiruchirapalli and Madurai in South India is the small railway station, Ammaiyaanaickanoor or Kodaikanal Road. Kodai is 50 miles from here. After a stretch of level run, the road rises steadily and steeply to the height of 6,854 feet. The whole scenery is as charmingly green as in the Nilgiris—a queer combination of hill and plain vegetation. Banana trees, which elsewhere are confined to the plains alone, are much in evidence here even in the upper reaches. In fact, there are extensive banana plantations in this area in which a variety known as the "hill bananas"—greatly in demand on account of its extremely sweet taste—is grown.

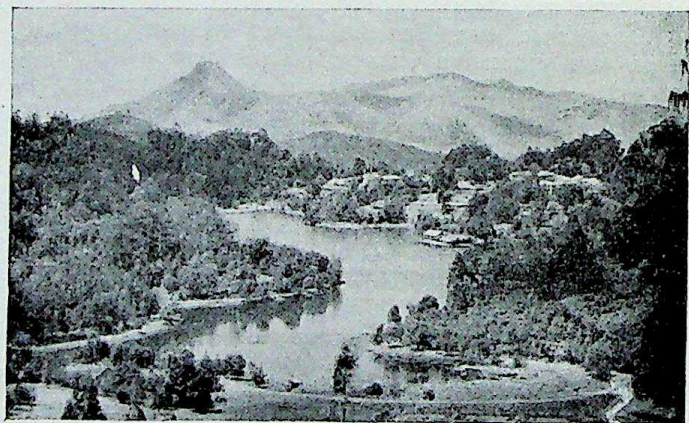
Not only do we find here on this cool height a very neat, well laid out, pretty and far flung town of 6 square miles, but also a wonderful lake brimful with sparkling water right in the heart of it.

Somewhat narrower than the Nainital lake, this lake is longer and more irregular in shape. Its four wide prongs run inland amid idyllic natural scenery. The perfectly level tarred road which skirts round the lake covers 2 miles and 6 furlongs. The hills around the lake do not rise precipitately to the sky and shut out the view, as at Nainital, but rise in gentle mounds covered all over with lovely green turf under shapely trees in all the different shades of green. Rows of stately Eucalyptus trees stand arm to arm towering above all in the distant horizon. One or two small pretty bungalows nestling among the rich foliage complete the picture of a story book fairy land.

Imagine in these charming surroundings nice little boats skimming noiselessly on the surface of the placid lake, being rowed around by holiday makers, many of whom are of the fairer sex, in pink, yellow, green or red garments. The nice Boat Club on the side of the lake is always busy with gay crowds. At the water's edge are neat lawns with white garden benches placed here and there beneath the trees. The lake does not get the morning sun so well but in the evening the golden glow of the setting sun, reflected on the waters, makes Southey's beautiful words—

“Mountain, vale and water, all imbued with
beauty”

—a throbbing reality.



View (with Perumal Peak), Kodaikanal.

There is no yachting on this lake as at Nainital and ponies for ride round the lake are also few and these are only very small ones intended for little children.

Carlton hotel which is the premier hotel of the town covers a good stretch of high grounds on one side of the lake. The view from the hotel verandah is one of the finest to be had anywhere.

Of all the hill resorts in India, Kodai records the lowest maximum temperature in summer. The mean maximum between March and May is only 67.6°F. It is strange that in winter too it records the highest minimum. The mean minimum is 47.0(F).

Evidently, for the wonderful agreeableness of temperature and low average humidity, it is claimed to possess a climate superior to any other hill station of India and is said to be one of the three best places in the world.

For its six square miles, the houses are very few indeed, mostly of the Western cottage type, each within spacious compound of flower and fruit trees. The roads are all tarred and beautiful. Being almost a table-land—although there are a few ups and downs here and there—the roads are motorable throughout and a good number of cycles are in use. In the sequestered roads and lanes there is plenty of level walk and walking in the beautiful surroundings is a pleasure.

Population of the whole town is only 12,000, a good part of which crowds round the bazar area and in Anandagiri, a nearby ledge of the hill, housing mainly the working and middle classes. This locality, too, is neater than similar quarters in other towns.

The whole place seems to be dominated by churches of which there are as many as nine. Practically every sect of the Christian Church is represented here. Most of the Churches are big, substantially built, and have fine well-maintained grounds. Schools are run by most.

There are four European Schools—High Clere School of the Americans, Presentation Convent, European High School, Swedish School for Swedish children, and Kochne Memorial School. European boys and girls and also men and women are, therefore, much in evidence everywhere. It is a popular summer resort for Europeans too of South India—the only other place being Ooty.

Outside Madras, Kodaikanal is known for its famous Observatory. It is the Solar Physical Observatory established by the Government of India in 1899 on the top of the hill overlooking the town at an elevation of 7,688 feet. It is the only one of its kind in India, which has done a good deal of original work in Solar Physics. It has a 12 inch telescope. It does the same type of work as Mount Willson Observatory in U.S.A. Visitors are allowed one day in the week.

The first thing that strikes a newcomer on arrival at Kodai is its rich flora. It is refreshingly green everywhere. Not a patch of ground but covered with soft-grassy lawn but no rank vegetation even in the neglected plots! Everything is spick and span.

Of the big trees, cypress, eucalyptus and acacia predominate. There are plenty of pear trees and some of the pears are of superior variety. Competing with the fruit trees are pretty big flower trees—rhododendron and magnolia. Such an abundance of magnolia trees and so big in size is rare elsewhere except, perhaps, in Dehra-dun.

Acacia trees seem to be a speciality of this place. This beautiful tree is not found in other hill stations, at any rate not in such profusion. The trees here are luxuriantly leafy and beautifully shapely. The eucalyptus trees here are of immense size. Trunks which two persons can hardly encompass with outstretched arms are quite common. The trees are truly majestic.

The compound of every house is full of beautiful flowers—mostly season flowers of many varieties. The most pleasing sight is Bryant Park close to the lake. Large size dahlias of the most beautiful tints immediately attract attention. The small tank in the garden with water lilies in it enhances its beauty. There is another public garden known as Chettiar Park at a higher level. Apart from these, there are wild flowers in abundance in every hedge and on every hill side. Another speciality of the place seems to be that wherever there is a stretch of uncultivated ground a class of pretty yellow daisy

like flowers on long stems springs up and reminds one of some of the beautiful Himalayan meadows.

Speaking of flowers, mention ought also to be made of another remarkable flower known in Tamil as 'Kurunji' (*Strobilanthes Kunthianes*). This flower blooms only once in 12 years! Of light blue colour, about an inch long, this flower covered whole mountain sides of Kodai in 1958. The plants are small and bushy.

There are various spots of great natural beauty round about Kodai.

The most remarkable sight of Kodai is the exquisite view of the plains from the Southern edge of the town. The 7,000 ft. high hill drops here abruptly and the beautiful picture of the plains as seen from here—with villages, towns, tanks and watercourse stretching for miles as far as distant Madurai—is a fascinating sight. The soil is mostly reddish with patches of green along the waters and looks like a coloured map spread on the ground and is in marked contrast to the dark green hills that rise from the plains here and there. From the height, the whole spectacle is very much like that of the sea. The hills in between appear as mighty billows thrown up by the ocean. It is really a remarkable view.

At night, the whole thing assumes quite a different aspect. Electric lights of no less than 10 places, big and small, are clearly discernible in the bosom of this ocean-like expanse, culminating in the distant horizon in the blazing lights of vast Madurai City. The lights of Peryakulam town, being the nearest, are most prominent. In the whole of India, there is hardly another spot where lights of ten different places can thus be seen all at one glance. The beauty of this grand spectacle beggars description. Coaker's Walk along the Southern edge of Kodai commands this wonderful view at its best.

There are three waterfalls near about Kodai.

- (1) *The Silver Cascades*—Five miles below the town. Can be seen from the motor route on way up to Kodai.

- (2) *Fairy Falls*—About three miles away. A nice picnic spot.
- (3) *Bear Shola Falls*—Nearest to the town. The final approach to the falls is through the most picturesque natural scenery. As the road descends, the hills on both sides fully clothed in green from top to bottom present a charming view.

Pillar Rocks—Is a popular sight-seeing place and is reached by the town bus. Three immense boulders of great height stand side by side and make an awe-inspiring spectacle.

Suicide point—Just behind the golf club the hill side drops abruptly to about 4,000 ft. ! The view below is wonderful and awe-inspiring.

The Golf Course of Kodai is about four miles away from the town. The waving lawns stretch for 3 miles and it is certainly one of the best courses in India.

Perumal Peak—(7,329 ft.)—Rises straight like the Rhino's horn opposite the town and is a famous landmark of the place.

For those interested in big game hunting, bison, spotted deer, tiger, ibex, sambur, fourhorned antelope and panther can be bagged between 10 to 20 miles away. Local Shikaris are available as guides at a reasonable cost in the two seasons—March to June and September to November.

It is strange that Kodaikanal has no crows or ants.

Kodaikanal is, thus, a convenient and healthy hill station of rare charm.

HOTELS AND LODGINGS :

Besides Carlton Hotel, which is the costliest, there are number of private boarding houses, run by European ladies, which are cheaper, e.g.,

(a) Laughing Waters,

(b) Burket Lodge,

UP State Museum, Lucknow

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(c) Mrs. Logan's Guest House, and

(d) Sterling Lodge.

In the Bazar area, there are a few Indian lodging houses and also a few Boarding and Lodging establishments.

EXCURSIONS

(1) *Berijam Lake*—This lake, 13 miles away, is the main excursion site outside Kodai. Both the lovely motor road and the scenery through which it passes are fine indeed. The road is over open country with pleasant undulations and a variety of flowering plants all along. If the year is one for the flowering of Kurinji flower, which blooms once in every twelve years, the journey is simply unforgettable. Gregarious flowering of Kurinji shrubs, with their light blue colour, every twelfth year is quite a phenomenon for Kodai. The previous flowering years were 1946 and 1958. The months of flowering are May and June.

(2) *Periyar Game Sanctuary*—There is regular bus service between Kodai and Cumban *via* Peryakulam. This is convenient for a visit to the sanctuary.

HOLIDAY HOME

Besides the hotels and lodgings mentioned above, Government of Madras run a Holiday Home at Kodai, about 4 miles away from the town, from April to June. Only Indian vegetarian food is served. Amenities of all sorts are provided. The charges are Rs. 18/- per day for single-bed and Rs. 34/- for double-bed, the same as for Carlton. Free motor transport is provided to visitors in station wagons.

CLIMATE

For its excellent agreeable climate and low humidity, Kodai is utilised in South India as a sanatorium.

SANASAR AND LITTLE KASHMIR

(JAMMU)

Sanasar is a name not at all familiar with the holiday crowds who rush to the hills as soon as there is a little rise in mercury in the plains. But those few who long for liberation for even a few days from the monotony and exactions of urban life and not simply escape the heat and are keen to enjoy the serene charm of the hills—the best that any hill may give—the cool life-giving air, the captivating woods, lovely meadows, sequestered pools of crystal waters, etc., anything better can hardly be imagined than charming Sanasar.

On the route to Srinagar from Jammu is the Dak Bungalow at Patni-top (7,000 feet) with a lovely small meadow in front. The Srinagar crowd gives little thought to this insignificant wayside shelter, but one cannot but feel somewhat attracted by the quiet charm of the place and also of its near neighbours, Batote and Kud. Kud has achieved some notoriety on account of its illustrious prisoner, Sheikh Abdullah, and Batote is known as a place for night rest for the bus to Srinagar. But these three places and their wonderful environs are really beautiful and are worth spending at least a few days in. But beautiful as these places are, they do not at all compare with the rare breath-taking charm of Sanasar. A road branches off at Patni-top and takes one to this rare beauty spot.

Sanasar is a circular cup-like meadow at about 7,000 feet, with a circumference as big as four miles, nestling among thick tall pines and firs on all sides with beautiful velvety slopes. This is far more beautiful than even the famous Gulmurg and has in addition a small lake, 'Sar', enhancing its charm considerably.

Snow-capped hills almost surround this gem of a place. With its healthy climate and sylvan surroundings, it is an ideal spot for rest and recuperation.

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 Sonemerg in Kashmir, 60 miles from Srinagar, which too is absolutely solitary in a lovely meadow surrounded by lofty snow-capped hills, is the favourite resort of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru for spending his rare holidays. But Sanasar with its lake seems to be more captivating. It, too, has its Dak Bungalow and rest house like Sonemerg and some plots suitable for tents.

The surrounding hills with lovely shady pathways over clean grounds beneath splendid trees, plenty of birds, humble cottages of hill people here and there and terraced rice fields in between are charming beyond description. The charms of sweet Sansar have been immortalised by Jammu people in songs in their simple Dogri language.

As Patni-top has its Sanasar, Batote has its Bhodarwah, commonly known as "Little Kashmir". From Batote, a 40-mile road leads to a glen of surpassing attractiveness and splendour. This little Kashmir is on the same height as the Kashmir Valley itself, that is, 5,000 feet and is quite resplendent with lovely green undulating meadows and sparkling waters. The name "Bhodarwah" means "Happy Region" in the Dogri language. This place resembles Pahalgam in that here, too, several impetuous streams pass through the glen, like the branches of the Lidar at Pahalgam, and naturally enhance its charm a good deal. But Pahalgam has not such rich orchards full of red sweet apples, peaches, etc., in autumn.

If one decides to spend the summer months in this exquisite place among charming hill people with their cheerfulness, dances, songs and winsome holiday costumes, one will have the additional opportunity of availing oneself of the several ideal beauty spots for excursions and picnics within a distance of six to ten miles in almost unbelievably fine surroundings ranging from 8,000 feet to 12,000 feet, viz., Seuj, Jai, etc. The very fine vistas to be had from these heights can easily be imagined.

Combination of beauty and health of these rare places is such that it is popularly believed that even the worst diseases get cured by spending some time there. On the top of all this, there is also plenty of the finest fruits to eat almost for the asking and the finest milk and butter.

A little higher up, at about 14,400 feet, there is the surpassingly beautiful lake of Wasiq Kund which, once seen, the visitor will not be able to forget easily.

KULU & KANGRA VALLEYS

The fame of great natural beauty of these two almost contiguous valleys is wide-spread throughout India. Pandit Nehru's recent visit to them for cure of his mental "staleness" has made them familiar to those who were not so conversant before.

With succession of very pleasant green highlands, forests, streams and silvery snow ranges visible behind dark majestic deodars, oaks and pines, these valleys provide also unmatched beauty and serenity to cure any fevered soul. There are people who prefer these valleys even to charming Kashmir.

Kangra—Kangra valley is lower in elevation ranging from 1,400 to 3,000 ft., while Kulu valley has an average elevation of 5,000 ft. There are villages in Kulu as high as 8,000 ft.

The motor road to Kulu from Pathankot is 175 miles long. There is a direct bus route passing through the heart of Kangra Valley. From Pathankot there is a narrow gauge railway line too and Kulu may be reached by road from Nagrota railway station.

The Kangra valley has a number of nice places for sight-seeing or of historical importance. Nurpur, 19 miles from Pathankot, has the historic Hindu Fort. The view of the wide plains from the top of the fort is excellent.

After some climb, the next stages of halt are at Kotla and Shapur. From Shapur the visitor has a magnificent view of the whole of the Kangra valley. The next halt is at Baijnath, a historic Hindu holy place.

Thereafter, at Palampur the road attains the height of 4,000 ft. There are tea gardens all around this quiet

township. The road proceeds north maintaining the same height but descends to 2,500 ft. at Mandi. Thickly covered scattered mountains round about provide contrast to the quiet plains and rice fields.

The lofty Dhaulā Dhar range overlooks the whole of this beautiful valley with its unsophisticated humanity and natural grandeur and variety. This lofty range rises abruptly from the uplands and runs almost through the whole length of the valley like a great wall. At places this noble range is snow-capped for the major portion of the year and its 16,000 ft. peaks are a marvellous sight. The old big town of Mandi is on the river Beas and is full of ancient stone temples of elaborate craftsmanship.

Kulu—From Mandi the motor road takes the visitor upto Manali in the heart of Kulu valley where the road ends. To many, this is the most hair-raising motor journey in India.

Just after the start, the road enters the Mandi-Larji gorge. At places it has been blasted through solid rock and at others the way passes over stone galleries hanging over the turbulent Beas river. This suspense continues till Aut is reached.

Here the road and the scene change abruptly and almost entirely. The road now passes through the heart of the lovely Kulu Valley along the bank of the Beas.

This stretch of 24 miles of valley is full of lovely orchards of pears, apples and cherries of the finest quality famous throughout India. The Bandrole orchard near Kulu and the Sunshine orchard at Manali are the finest.

Manali is 6,000 ft. above sea level. Thereafter, the road ascends, fit only for pedestrian traffic and pack animals. This is the old trade route passing through

Rohtung pass (13,500 ft.) and Bara Lacha pass (16,500 ft.), Lahaul, Ladakh, Spiti and even to Central Asia. Kulu may be reached also direct from Simla either *via* Luhri and Jalori pass (10,000 ft.), or *via* Narkanda and the Hindustan Tibet Road to Rampur and from there through Bashleo pass (10,750 ft.).

ROUTE :

The main gateway to the twin valleys of Kulu and Kangra is Pathankote railway station which may be conveniently reached from Delhi travelling over night by train. From there, one is advised to go by motor to Kulu direct instead of by the narrow gauge train to Nagrota and from there by motor to Kulu. The distance is 175 miles and the road is excellent passing through almost unrivalled Himalayan scenery. The tourist is advised to reserve his bus seats beforehand either with Kulu Valley Transport Company or Himachal Pradesh Government Transport by writing to the District Tourist Officer, Dharamsala. Dharamsala is the headquarters of Kangra District and is known all over India as the asylum of the Dalai Lama.

CLIMATE :

Since both Kangra and Kulu—especially the latter—are noted for unsurpassed wealth of fruits, the best season for visit is evidently after the rains—September and October.

Palampur, Mandi and Manali are the only towns worth mention. Hotel accommodation on modern lines is almost absent.

DALHOUSIE

Like the abandoned city of Fatehpur Sikri near Agra, the Punjab hill station Dalhousie has now the appearance almost of the nursery tale empty palace of the sleeping princess. It is virtually a dead city.

A few years before the Indian Mutiny, attracted by its qualities and charm, Col. Charles Napier obtained possession of it from some Punjab potentates, gave it the name of Dalhousie, after the then Viceroy of India, and built it up assiduously as the ideal summer resort for the British Army.

The Baloon Cantonment, as the military portion of the town is known, has exquisitely fine roads and is scrupulously clean. There are almost countless barracks and other paraphernalia of the army—but all vacant now.

Dalhousie has to be reached from Pathankote, the famous railhead now for Kashmir. The distance is about 50 miles. The road is one of the best in India through charming natural scenery. As the car approaches the destination, it passes through mist and an abundance of wild flowers. The fatigue of the strenuous journey is smoothed almost instantaneously. The vast plains of the Punjab and the high range of Pir Panjal of Kashmir beyond it are visible through the haze now and then. On the other side, at a distance, is the great Dhawaladhar range.

Reaching Dalhousie, one can hardly believe that he is in an Indian town. It is, perhaps, the most westernised and modern hill station of India. Wonder of wonders, there seems to exist no middle class locality, not to speak of the houses of the Indian poor. Even Darjeeling and Nainital have homes of the common people and their inevitable drab look.

In the pleasantly cool atmosphere, the fine woods, gardens, waterfalls, avenues after avenues of shady walks of oak, pine and cedar and beautiful residences nestling among luxuriant trees, the foreigner is at once

transported to the best of his own land. Some think of Scotland, others of the Swiss Alps or of South Canada.

The rich vegetation and flowers of Dalhousie remind one of Darjeeling, but Dalhousie with its cantonment is much bigger and the big enclosures of lovely bungalows are much vaster.

It is, however, strange that the majority of the almost innumerable bungalows are vacant. A Mali here or a Keeper there is about the only evidence of human existence.

The town of Dalhousie is spread over a number of hills—Vanjar, Patrain, Bakrota, Tehra and Kalhlog. The top of Bakrota is almost a lovely plateau.

One of the grandest sights of the place is the perpetual snow range of Pangri (23,000 ft.). It is nearly as pleasing to the eye as Kanchenjunga from Darjeeling.

Below Pangri hill is the great Chamba Valley of which too Dalhousie is a part. The town of Chamba is only 9 miles away.

The Mall Road is the nerve centre of the town and the Dalhousie club on it is still lively.

The fame of Dalhousie's health is very old. Poet Tagore accompanied his father there as a boy. Once when very ill, Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose spent a long time there as the guest of Dr. Dharamvir.

Thus, Dalhousie is one of the loveliest, healthy hill stations of India with plenty of verdure, abundant flowers and almost endless beautiful walks. The birds, too, are unforgettable. Such a great variety is rare elsewhere.

The views of perpetual snow, the great Chamba Valley and river Iravati down below, and above all, the charming sunset of Dalhousie are all unforgettable. A trek to Kalapahar waterfall is exciting.

There are beautiful hotels in the best European style.

HARDWAR, HRISHIKESH, KANKHAL & LACHMANJHULA

Outside of Kashmir, there is hardly any place in India as attractive from the point of view of natural beauty as Hardwar, Hrishikesh, Lachmanjhula and Kankhal. All these four places, almost within sight of one another, form an integrated whole and have practically the same form and feature, the same tradition and appeal.

Hardwar is a night's straight journey from Delhi to the north. The railway line terminates a few more stations ahead at Dehra Dun.

The great importance of all these spots is derived from the Ganga, the sacred river of India, just emerging here from her snowy abode into the lands of teeming humanity to make them drink from her breast, to rear them and finally gather them up in her bosom.

It is at Lachmanjhula that she is first seen descending to the plains. Cutting very deep into the earth, with the cliffs still standing on both sides, she runs impetuously towards Hrishikesh on to the distant plains. Standing at Dhruvaghat, where the stream has been crossed by the beautiful steel-hanging bridge, Lachmanjhula, and viewing the descent of the mighty waters from the height, watching her speeding along and fast widening out in the distant horizon is an unforgettable sight indeed. If it is winter, the very bed of the river with its pebbles is clearly visible through the beautiful blue of the water and lovely big fish swimming gracefully can each be counted. In the rains, the tide has its own majesty.

On the opposite bank about a mile down stream is Swargashram, a charity centre for Sadhus who are daily supplied with cooked food. A lovely Gita Mandir too stands here. Many small cottages of Sadhus can be seen on both sides of the road leading to Swargashram.

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There is a free ferry across the river to Muni-Ke-Reti, about a few miles above Hrishikesh. In recent years, the Divine Life Society of Swami Sivananda has been working here and developing fast with its multifarious programme for spiritual upliftment of humanity.

Hrishikesh is a small township centring round the huge Dharamshala of the saint Kali Kamliwala through whose sole efforts much of the travail of the annual difficult pilgrimage to Kedarnath and Badrinarayan has been considerably lighted. At the ghat, the waters of the Ganga lash themselves against the bank with great fury. The view from here, too, of the fast flowing river and beyond is magnificent. There are many hermitages, etc., all about the place. There are a few famous temples of great antiquity.

Hardwar, a few miles further down, is a busy town of crowded, tall, white buildings and temples, standing on the right bank of the river with the high stately mountains close behind forming a perfect background.

There is a nicely paved promenade along the river which broadens gradually into a beautiful spacious island platform with the waters on three sides. The river here enters in part into an enclosure forming the sacred Brahmarkunda.

Decorated with the statue of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose and a profusion of electric lights, this is the most pleasant spot in Hardwar, especially in the evening when the charming ceremony of Arti of the river with multicoloured oil lamps is performed by the priests of the famous temple and ghat of Har-Ki-Peri. The river is worshipped too by visitors, especially ladies, by floating lovely small lighted lamps in leaf cups full of flowers. It may well be imagined that the extremely beautiful and touching ceremony in the lovely setting is charming beyond description.

The constant flow of ladies and gentlemen in fine clothes from all corners of India with their varied and

colourful costumes makes Hardwar very interesting. Moreover, there is every amenity of civil life here. For such a crowded place, the sanitary arrangements are commendable.

Dharmashalas, rather than hotels, are in vogue of which there are hundreds. Temples of all descriptions, too, are found at every turn. There are scores of eating houses which are astonishingly well run, providing excellent food. For Westerners, there is a lack of hotels. Mayapur Dak Bungalow is eminently suitable for them. The view from the place is also excellent.

Kankhal, a couple of miles or more further down, is a suburb of Hardwar, known for the big Ramakrishna Mission Hospital there. From the religious point of view, however, its importance is due to the fact that it is reputed to be the site of the celebrated Yajna performed in the days of Yore by King Daksha who, according to mythology, was the father of Sati, the spouse of Lord Shiva. While all the other gods were invited on the occasion, Shiva was not. On the daughter's remonstrance, abuses were hurled upon her husband. Unable to endure this insult, Sati breathed her last on the spot. Shiva rushed down and lifted up the dead body on his trident and whirled it so fast that the limbs got dismembered and fell in 52 bits all over India. Everyone of these spots has a famous temple now and is considered the most sacred spot on earth.

The site of this famous incident is marked by a bathing ghat with big stone steps. This is a very quiet and lovely spot. Moreover, the river in front, though shallow, is very turbulent, rushing like boiling waters over the big pebbles. This is a very lovely sight with the hills and forests on the opposite shore providing excellent background.

Thus combination of mighty HIMALAYAS with the ever youthful lovely GANGA and age old halo of mystery and spirituality make Hardwar and its environs spots of unique charm soothing the troubled spirit of countless men and women.

ALMORA

Nainital and Ranikhet in Kumaon are creations of the British but Almora, which is the headquarters of the district of that name, is not so. It is an old Hindu town 30 miles further inside the heart of the Himalayas than Ranikhet on the same route. Straddling on a long ridge of 5,600 ft. above sea level, it is 2 miles in length. In spite of its lower altitude, it is cooler in summer than Ranikhet or Nainital. The temperature rarely goes above 88° (F). Another merit of this hill station is its lower rainfall and humidity. The climate is, therefore, delightful, although, being an old town, it may lack somewhat in modernity.

The town may have grown in age but nature has not. The beautiful walks and pine groves are within easy reach. The cool breeze blowing through the whistling pines and deodars is as refreshing as ever.

True to Hindu tradition, the surrounding hills have a temple each on top. This gives the place great beauty. To add to the charm, lovely snow peaks gleaming in sunshine are visible from the crest of the ridge, the parade.

The stone-paved bazar is quite spacious and the tall houses on both sides, some of which go up to four storeys, look quite pretty from a distance.

The historic Almora fort in the vicinity adds solemnity to the scene. It is still in use housing the district officers and the treasury.

The main charm of Almora, however, lies in its never-to-be-forgotten beauty spots scattered about.

Just 4 miles away is Kalimattya ridge—so called because of the colour of the clay found there. For its charming scenery and the fascinating views obtainable from it, this spot has been selected by a band of Europeans, adopting Hindu ascetic life, for their residence. Long range view as far as distant Nepal can be had

from here and close by are the high peaks, Seehee Dēvi, Bandnee Devi and Binsar. The beauty of Binsar Hill (7,913 ft.), especially of the gorgeous forest scenery to be found in its dense forests with ferns and hundreds of wild flowers, is indescribably grand. The spot is, perhaps, the prettiest in whole of Kumaon.

Kausani is another remarkable spot. The view of the snow ranges and snow peaks from the verandah of the neat Dak Bungalow there is wonderful. Attracted by the quiet serenity of the place, Gandhiji spent a few days here engaged in writing his famous book *Anasakti Yoga*. If the visitor has the time, he could arrange a trip to the Pindari Glacier, about 75 miles away and 13,000 to 14,000 ft. above sea level. This journey may be arranged in easy stages. Dak Bungalows are provided at 8 stages upto the foot of the glacier. The charm of the route itself is sufficient to compensate the trouble involved. It passes through some of the best Himalayan scenery. The sight of the glacier—over 2 miles long and 300 to 400 yds. broad—and the surrounding loveliness of the vegetation and bird life is wonderful.

Thus, Almora and its environs have rare attractions. Lured by its charm, the Ramakrishna Mission established in 1899 the Mayavati Ashram in the heart of the forest about 42 miles from Almora. It is a rare spot for quiet meditation. One of the Mission's journals devoted to Hindu religion and advaitic philosophy, the *Prabuddha Bharata*, issues from here.

There is a Ramkrishna Mission centre in Almora Cantt. also.

The famous dancer, Udai Shankar, too, was attracted by this place and established his dance centre here.

Recently an Anandamayee Ashram has been built at Patal Devi locality by the disciples of the lady saint.

HISTORY :

Almora was founded in 1560 by Raja Kalyân Chand. It remained in the hands of the Chand dynasty till

it passed to the Gurkhas. The British acquired it from the latter in 1815 and made it the Headquarters of the Almora District of Uttar Pradesh (then the United Provinces of Oudh and Rohilkhand).

PLACES OF INTEREST :

Besides the beauty spots mentioned above, the following institutions are worth a visit :—

- (1) *Industrial Training Centre* of Central Government.
- (2) *Janardan Polytechnic Institute* of State Government.
- (3) *The Vivekananda Laboratory*—Run by the Great Indian Botanist Shri Bosi Sen conducting extremely interesting research work on plant physiology.
- (4) *Nanda Devi Temple*—Centre of all orthodox Hindu ladies. Once a year after the rains, a grand fair is held here which makes Almora the centre of attraction for men and women of far and near.

CLIMATE :

Lord Curzon visiting the town as Governor-General remarked :

“ I have been to many famous places not only in this country but to all the famous places of other countries but I could not find such a climate anywhere.”

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru in his Autobiography dwells at length on the nice climate and unique natural beauty of Almora where he was a prisoner for a long time. The stately deodar trees held his imagination. “ There is nothing to beat your deodars,” he once remarked.

Crowning these all come Mahatma Gandhi's remarks at his first visit to the place.

“ *When there are places like Almora I wonder why people go to Switzerland.*”

EXCURSIONS :

Besides Kausani, Binsar Hill and the great Pindari Glacier mentioned above, Almora is the gateway for many to Kailash Mansarovar.

TEHRI—GARHWAL

The famous traveller, ardent lover of the hills and celebrated Bengali author, Probodh Kumar Sanyal, has said that, as the result of long and persistent publicity, Kashmir has come to be known today as the "heaven on earth", but all those who have seen with eyes open and have weighed properly both Kashmir and Garhwal are well aware that such "heavens on earth" are scattered all over Garhwal. He regards Garhwal as the finest and the most sacred region of the Himalayas.

Hindu scriptures have also declared Uttarakhand, of which Tehri Garhwal is a part, as "*Bhooswarg*" (Sanskrit for "heaven on earth").

The region lies north of Hardwar within a few miles of Mussoorie and Chakrata. It cradles not only two of the holiest places of the Hindus, viz., Badrinath and Kedarnath, but is the mother of two of the most famous rivers of India, the Ganga and the Jumna. The sources are known as Gangotri and Yamunettri, respectively.

Capt Skinnew was, perhaps, the first foreigner to set out in search of the source of the Jumna in 1866. He observed :

"I have beheld nearly all the celebrated scenery of Europe which poets and painters have immortalised and of which all the tourists of the world are enamoured, but I have seen it surpassed in these unfrequented and almost unknown regions."

This wonderful land is flanked chiefly by four roads leading to the four noted destinations, Badrinath, Kedarnath, Gangotri and Yamunettri. The roads, too, follow the two rivers, Ganga and Jumna, and their tributaries, Alakananda, Mandakini and Saraswati.

The chief characteristic of Garhwal is that it is green all over. Most of the seasons the green hill sides are

CC-O. In Public Domain. Digitized by Sarayu Trust and eGangotri also studded with myriads upon myriads of flowers of the brightest hue with lovely butterflies hovering over them. Kumaon is well known also for its great variety of birds and Garhwal, which is part of Kumaon, has splendid birds. Against this lovely background, the sequestered roads wind their way beneath the shade of pines, deodars, oak and papri. The blue water of the lovely rivers visible below on one side now and then continues to make each enchanting spot a haven of peace. Watching over this great beauty stand the mighty snow-capped peaks, Nanda Devi, Nanda Kot and Nanda Ghunti, which suddenly come up before one at a turning of the road, smooth the spirit, and recede from the view after a time. Stretches of black and bare hills, too, appear occasionally. They make the forests coming next dearer still. There are the temples—any number of them—of every variety and of all ages covering the whole of Uttarkhand. If you go a little out of the way, you will stumble against Sadhus—scores of them—some in the temple precincts, some in the mountain caves and some others in the depth of the forest. They possess practically nothing, they want nothing—an eternally satisfied lot, living almost on nothing. They are not the so-called Sadhus of the plains with never satisfied cravings. The Sadhus here shun the highways, they shun the company of men. So most of the pilgrims do not see them.

Most visitors to the holy places of Tehri Garhwal start the journey from Hrishikesh and the chief goal is Badrinath. Passing Lachhmanjhula, about three miles ahead the real trek begins. First comes Vashista Gufa, the reputed abode of sage Vashistha and six miles beyond is Anandkashi (formerly Vigni) named recently after the living woman saint Mata Anand Mai.

After passing Vyas Ghat, associated with sage Vyas, the classifier of the Vedas and the author of the Mahabharata, Deoprayag is reached after travelling 43 miles from Hrishikesh. Here Alakananda adds her waters to the Ganges.

Three roads meet here: one from Gangotri, the second from Yamunettri and the third and main one from Badrinath through Kirtinagar, 25 miles up. Crossing the Ganga here over a suspension bridge, the road passes through Srinagar, Pauri and Chamoli on to Pipalkoti. The motor bus terminates here leaving the next 38 miles uncovered. This portion passes through Gulabkoti, Joshimath and Pandukeswar. The distance from Kirtinagar to Badrinath is 118 miles. Of these places, Pauri and Joshimath are important. The town of Pauri stands on the top of a lofty eminence 6,000 feet above sea level. It is the Headquarters of Garhwal District and a beautiful landmark for miles about.

Joshimath derives its name from Jyotirmath established by Sri Sankaracharya. It is a grand sight, an extensive amphitheatre enclosed by lofty hills on three sides ten to thirteen thousand feet high. The selection of this awe-inspiring beautiful site by the great Hindu religious leader for his monastery was excellent.

The journey is long and strenuous but the almost unfailling company of the gurgling waters, beautiful climate, wonderful valleys, quiet townships in between at the confluence of rivers, the unspoilt simple hill men and the holy atmosphere throughout sufficiently beguile the spirit of the physically worn out traveller. It needs hardly be said that people making the trip by motor will no doubt save much of the travail but will undoubtedly miss much. The well chiselled peak Nilkantha (21,650 feet high) forms a background to the Badrinath temple (10,284 feet) situated in the village of Badrinath in a valley 3 miles long and about one mile broad. In fact the peak dominates the scene.

The Kedarnath route has few places of interest except Rudraprayag, 18 miles from Srinagar, which is a beautiful place at the confluence of Alakananda and Mandakini rivers. The bus terminates on this route at Agastamunchatti. About 30 miles remain to be covered. Triyuginarayan is the most important place on this

CC-Q. In Public Domain. Digitized by Sarayu Trust and eGangotri road. A fire goes on burning in the temple there reputed to be the sacrificial fire which was first kindled on the occasion of the marriage of Lord Shiva with Parvati.

Kedarnath is 11,500 feet above sea level and is much colder than Badrinath. There is snow and ice in almost all seasons.

The Yamunetri road from Hrishikesh passes through Narendranagar which is the headquarters of the district. Forty-one miles beyond it is Tehri, the old capital of this state. From Tehri, the motor road goes to Dharasu 262 miles beyond. The road passes through almost level ground amid flourishing crops, so unusual for these hill areas. The bus route terminates here. From Dharasu, Yamunetri is about 48 miles passing through very bad road—almost no road in parts. Yamunetri is about 10,800 feet above sea level. The actual source of the river is about 4 miles beyond. It is situated on the western flank of the great peak of Bandarpunch, 20,731 feet.

Gangotri is not far from Yamunetri. Descending 25 miles from Gangotri, the road is taken from Simli.

The place of interest on this road is the famous Uttarkashi which has a regular colony of Sadhus, some of whom are eminent personages. Situated on the bank of the Ganga with the streams Varnua and Assi on two sides, exactly like the great Varanashi itself, it is a place of great charm and beauty. Gaumukh glacier which is the source of the Ganga is about 65 miles from Uttarkashi. There is a hot sulphur spring near about. The road passes through Harsil, a place of great natural beauty. The concluding nine miles of this route to Gaumukh is practically without any roads.

The glacier, however, is of great beauty and compares favourably with the great Pindari.

VALLEY OF FLOWERS :

Ascending beyond Gaumukh one comes across a glacier of surprising beauty known as Merudhara. Half a dozen or more big jets of water continuously emerge from the great glacier to combine and merge eventually with the Ganga at Gaumukh.

After this is crossed with difficulty a high mountain wall shuts up the view almost completely. Tracing old foot tracks meandering under high conifers and circumventing huge boulders the efforts are amply compensated when one discovers the 100 yards wide pass through the rocks known as "Gate to Heaven" at the other end of which is the world famous "Valley of Flowers" or Tapoban. The variety, glorious colouring, shape and size of these wonderful flowers, most of which are also fragrant in that spot of ethereal beauty within sight of the bewitching snow ranges, beggar description.

Further up another glacier and a beautiful peak almost of the shape of Shiva's image come to view. This is the celebrated Sumeru peak recounted in Hindu mythology from olden days. Coming suddenly face to face with this mighty and wonderful spectacle one is apt to forget oneself for some time.

Rewarded by this one is apt to be spurred on to go further up. He will then see something which is almost beyond human imagination—glaciers of four bright colours—white, yellow, black and skyblue!

The road now is smoother, almost a tableland. Two miles further trek will take one to a spot of breathtaking beauty—the far famed Nandan Ban. In a wide valley guarded almost on all sides by snow peaks lies the grandest natural flower garden in the world.

Those who were fortunate to see the remarkable colour film of this wonderful beauty spot and of some of the rare flowers of striking beauty prepared by Sri Buddha Bose of Calcutta and exhibited by him in many towns of India will have some idea of the unique treasure that India possesses. *Really India is unique, India is wonderful.*

LANSDOWNE

The hill station of Lansdowne on the Himalayas in Tehri Garhwal is not much known to the general public, but in point of scenery and health it is one of the finest in India.

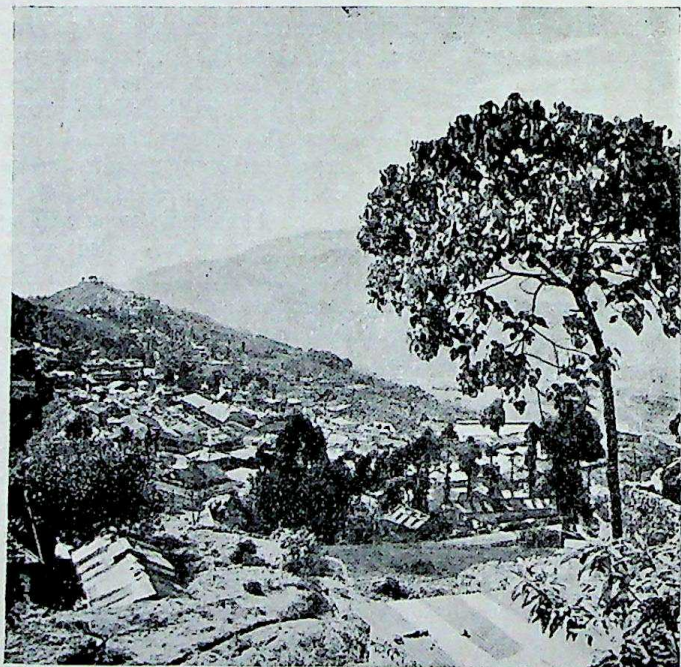
A small train takes the visitor from Najibabad to Kotdwara railhead at the foot of the Himalayas. Lansdowne is about 30 miles from here. Almost halfway is the small township of Dogadda from where the rest of the journey is very steep but almost at each turn of the road fresh beauty of landscape amply compensates the trouble.

It is a pity that Lansdowne has been utilised almost solely by the military so far. It is the headquarters of the Garhwali Regiments of the Government of India. Like Ranikhet, practically all the beautiful bungalows are government-owned—either officers' quarters, offices or clubs. As in all military stations, the town is extremely well maintained, every thing is neat and tidy, but somewhat lifeless. The beauty of the surrounding landscape is excellent. Quite a rare view of snow peaks, not visible from Ranikhet or Kausani, is obtainable from Lansdowne. These are a pair of loveiy snow peaks side by side those of Kedarnath and Badrinath.

More than its bracing cool air, the water of Lansdowne is well reputed. Its digestive property is unique. It proves beneficial to most types of stomach complaints. Lansdowne is thus an ideal spot for a sanatorium.

KURSEONG

The picturesque hill station of Kurseong is about half way on the hill road from Siliguri to Darjeeling. The interesting Darjeeling Himalayan Railway has a small station here too. The township, though smaller than Darjeeling, is not smaller than Kalimpong. But while Kalimpong is a trading centre—being the gateway for all the foreign trade of Sikkim—and Darjeeling is always full of visitors and therefore somewhat crowded, for those who seek solitude, Kurseong is the better resort. Although youngmen get fed up here pretty soon, there not being much sight-seeing here to do, for those whose blood, through age, has cooled down a little, there is hardly any better haven of peace and rest.



Kurseong.

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The scenery is charming everywhere, to say the least. The town is neat and the fascinating arrangement of innumerable picture-like small houses surrounded by lovely flower gardens, some of them literally loaded with roses of all hues with bush roses, red, pink or yellow, entwining round every inch of the garden fencing, is beautiful beyond description.

Glimpses of the lovely and wonderfully green far-stretching Bengal plains, as may be had through the gaps here and there through the pines, firs and birches fringing the Main Road, are simply unforgettable. On the opposite side of the road, the glistening snow caps on the peaks, peeping through the dark deodars here and there, sooth the most troubled spirit.

Shops are not many here but the few that are found are decent ones. There are even a few milkbars. All these are on the main road. The more fastidious purchaser may always go up to Darjeeling by taxi, bus or train.

From the level main road, the next big road of the place goes up over the well-known Dowhill of Kurseong in many charming rounds passing many neat wooden gateways with interesting name-plates. Excepting one or two decent gentlemen or ladies, going up or down, there is hardly any traffic. A troop of romping European school boys or girls will, of course, suddenly sweep upon one and pass away in a matter of minutes. The Englishman is apt to forget that he is not in his own native land, in its finest part too, in the best of seasons among his own kids. The sights and scenes described by Miss Mitford in her fascinatingly beautiful book "Our Village" can all be found here in their home setting.

Is it not an ideal place to have schools in? The British, when they were here, made full use of this

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unique opportunity by opening many residential schools for their children on Dowhill. Other eminently suitable places for residential schools in ideal surroundings and ideal climate are Nainital in the north and Kodaikanal in the south. These charming places literally hum with children's pleasant voices. Dehra Dun, too, is also a great place for schools, but its summer heat is more oppressive than the winter cold of these places.

Hotel accommodation both in European and Indian style is limited.

For its excellent climate, a T. B. sanatorium has been established and is doing very creditable work.

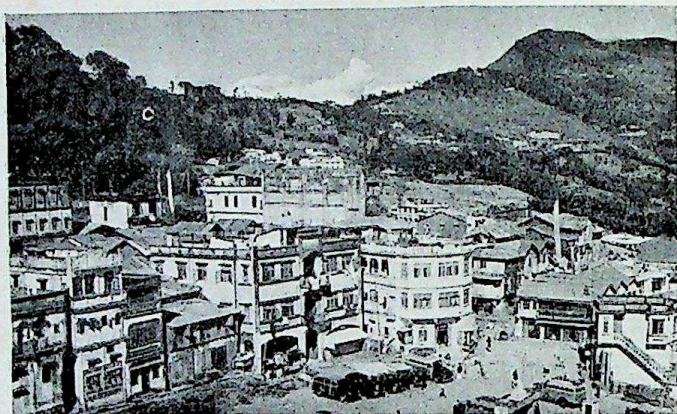
KALIMPONG

Kalimpong is a delightful though small hill station on the Himalayas, just 30 miles away from Darjeeling, at a lower level. It has to be reached from Siliguri railway station by motor, the distance is about 32 miles and passes over the famous Sevak Bridge on Tiesta. There is a road from Darjeeling too *via* Ghum, but this road becomes almost unusable during the rains due to almost constant and heavy land-slides.

Passing the famous Happy Valley and Lopchu Tea Garden, the road from Darjeeling begins to descend rapidly and, within about 20 miles, it drops about 6,000 ft. to the bed of river Tiesta, only about 1,000 ft. above sea level. Due to this steep descent, buses do not ply. Land Rovers are the biggest vehicles used. As the road descends, the vegetation becomes more and more luxuriant on both sides and the incomparable Kanchenjunga is seen much clearer than at Darjeeling. At times, a whole snow range is seen on one side not too far away. The lovely scenery remains imprinted in one's memory for ever.

Proceeding half way, the beautiful view of the dark water of Tiesta meeting the deep red water of Rangit is visible down below. In the beautiful surroundings, this is a fascinating sight. The road to Sikkim, too, can be seen clearly on the other side of the confluence.

On this road too, a beautiful modern cement concrete bridge spans the Tiesta. It is so warm here, due evidently to low altitude, that it becomes difficult to keep anything warm on the body. After the Bridge is crossed, the motor road ascends steeply for about 3,000 feet till it reaches Kalimpong.



Motor Stand, Kalimpong.

Kalimpong stands on a slightly undulating plain with gently rising hills in the background. There is a lovely play-ground in front of the Motor Stand. A marble statue of Mahatma Gandhi in sitting posture adorns the top of the gateway. The bazar area is close to the motor stand. There is a crowd of lofty multi-storeyed houses which seems badly in keeping with the beautiful hills around with lovely bungalows on them here and there.

Two almost parallel roads run through the whole length of the busy portion of the town. It is almost level walk, full of shops, hotels and restaurants on both sides. Kalimpong, being the main gateway of trade between India and Sikkim and even beyond to Tibet, is a great centre of trade and commerce, bulk of which is in the hands of the enterprising Marwari community.

Beautiful tarred roads lead to the bungalows on the green hills. They look very pretty and inviting indeed.

UP State Museum, Lucknow

PLACES OF INTEREST :

Of the places of interest in Kalimpong, Graham's Home for European and Anglo Indian orphans is the foremost. It practically occupies a whole hillock. Varieties of handloom textiles produced here are very lovely and are justly famous. The Ramkrishna Mission, too, occupies the top of another hill.

The terrace garden named "Durbin" belonging to a rich gentleman is very beautiful and commands a grand prospect for miles. Being open to the public and conveniently close to the town, it is a delightful picnic spot.

CLIMATE :

The main attraction of Kalimpong is its temperate and healthy climate. Being only about 4,000 feet above sea level, the cold is not too severe even in winter. Poet Tagore felt attracted to the place and stayed in Gouripur palace here for a long time. This speaks of the charm of the place.

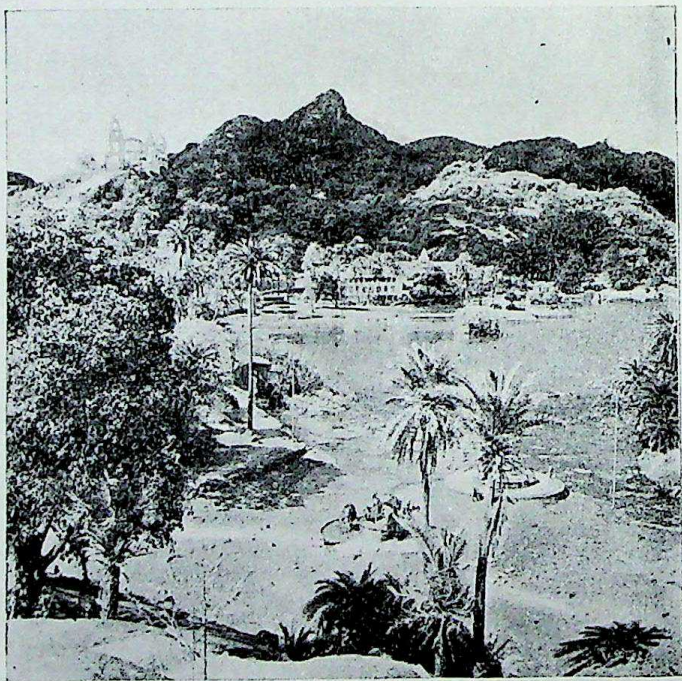
HOTELS AND LODGINGS :

Besides the hotels in the bazar area, Mukherjee's Hotel, situated about a mile away, is in a lovely bungalow surrounded by a garden. It caters to all tastes.

MOUNT ABU

Of the few hill stations in India outside the Himalayas, Mount Abu occupies an important place because it is about the only oasis in summer within easy reach of the burning plains of Rajasthan and Gujarat. Although in Gujarat territory, the town of importance nearest to it is Udaipur in Rajasthan at the same latitude. It seems strange that a place in this hot region can be cool enough to be considered a hill resort. The fact is that it has the highest altitude among places between the Himalayas in the North and the Nilgiris in the South.

The motor road from Abu Road railway station on the Ahmedabad-Delhi metre gauge railway rises upto



Lake View—Mount Abu.
UP State Museum, Lucknow

4,000 ft. within 18 miles. The serpentine tarred road begins to get quite interesting from the fourth mile—high rocks rising straight on one side and thickly wooded green steep hillside dropping down on the other. Green wavy hills on the distant horizon add further charm to the scenery.

When, however, the top is reached, the long narrow tableland, 12 miles long and only 2 to 3 miles in width, holding a regular city with beautiful roads, fine houses of the rich, nice hotels, temples, hospital and church, is apt to make one forget that he is at a height at all but for its refreshing cool air. The long Nakhu lake surrounded by diverse small and big temples among big rocks of fantastic shape looks very pretty. One rock resembles a toad, another a hooded nun.

At one end, the land rises sharply to height of 5,650 ft. It is Guru Peak (Guru Sikhar). Attracted by its cool climate and charm, several ex-Maharajas of Rajasthan States built stately mansions here as summer resorts. These fine buildings surrounded by lovely gardens have made the place beautiful. The Rajputana Club of the Europeans, too, is big and nice.

There are several Hindu temples of which Achaleswar Temple, Adhar Devi (or Arvinda Devi) and Raghunathji Temple are prominent. Achaleswar is a big temple of Mahadeva. The large Nandi (bull)—favourite of Madhava—at the entrance, built of brass, is quite attractive.

Adhar Devi temple is on a rock, practically cut out of it, and is to be reached by a flight of 400 steps. Raghunathji temple by the side of the lake is in charming environs.

The Polo Ground in the heart of the town, used now for all sorts of games, *viz.*, hockey, football, volley ball and deck tennis, is a popular rendezvous for visitors and adds life to the place. The old Residency and Lawrence School have extensive and fine grounds.

All these make Mount Abu quite an interesting place to escape to from the gruelling heat of the summer months. The mean summer temperature is 70°F. It never goes beyond 90°F.

But the main all-India attraction of Mount Abu is its unique Dilwara temple of the Jains. It is a group of five gems of temples of flawless white marble but surprisingly plain and deceptive from outside.

Two of these are the foremost and are really matchless both in design and execution. The first is known as Vimala Vasahi after its builder Vimala Shah, a minister of Gujarat. It was completed in A.D. 1032. It is of the finest sculptural and architectural decoration of extremely elaborate workmanship—the fineness of execution on stone is almost unbelievable. The total effect is extremely beautiful too. There is a creative strength and the freshness of its charming design is not to be found in other Jain temples. It is dedicated to the first Jain Tirthankar, Adinath. There are endless processions of animals and the temple commemorates divinities both of Jain and Hindu mythology. The incredible richness of the designs is only to be seen to be believed.

The other temple was built in 1231 A.D. by two brothers, Vastupala and Tejapala, who too were ministers of Gujarat. The most remarkable thing in this temple is the dome of the porch from the centre of which drops a pendant in the shape of a cluster of lotus flowers, the execution of which is perfection itself. The temple is dedicated to the 22nd Tirthankar, Neminath.

It becomes difficult to believe that the artists have worked on stone. They are as fine as workmanship on ivory. It is doubtful whether in those days anything superior was either attempted or accomplished in India.

HOTELS AND LODGINGS :

Mount Abu is provided with ample hotel accommodation, such as, Mount Hotel, Hillview Hotel, Central Hotel, Gujarat Hindu Lodge, etc.

There are a couple of Dharamshallas and as many as six Dak Bungalows.

MAHABALESHWAR

Although only 4,500 feet high, Mahabaleshwar may well be compared with the Himalayan hill stations, Darjeeling, Mussorie or Nainital, not only because it is the highest town on the hills in Western India but because in character, bracing climate, temperature and attractiveness it is of the same class.

Quite conveniently situated within 200 miles of Bombay and only 75 miles from Poona, it provides all the charm and fun available elsewhere. On top of this, it had the distinction of being the summer capital of the former Bombay State. So, it has been developed nicely by the Government with fine motorable roads and plenty of picnic spots. The merchant princes of Bombay have enhanced its beauty by building palatial picturesque houses and opening luxury hotels.

The natural scenery too, with deep valleys and wide open landscapes round about, is quite attractive. There are so many beauty 'points' within coverable distance that a succession of enjoyable trips may be arranged in new sites throughout one's stay in the season.

The season here is a brief period of three months because, with the break of the Arabian Sea monsoon in late May or early June, the place becomes intolerably wet and is completely desolate. The traders move down to Poona wherefrom they mostly come. The Bombay Government used to stay here for three months only in summer and not for six months as elsewhere.

The most interesting and unique beauty spot of Mahabaleshwar is Arthur Seat, about 10 miles from the town. Here there is a sheer drop of hundreds of feet. But very, very strangely enough, at window point close by there is small window-like gap which

provides such a grand view of the whole panorama beyond that the visitor is enthralled. No doubt, there are just a few other sights of its kind elsewhere in India. For example, the grand view of the plains of Sylhet from top of the Shillong-Sylhet Road, view of the surrounding plains from Coaker's walk in Kodaikanal or the enchanting view of the Bengal plains from Kurseong are all there, but the sight from Arthur Seat through a small lens-like window is unique.

A few stately ancient structures erected by man here have helped to make the fine natural scenery somewhat more romantic. First is the temple of Mahabaleshwar. The second one is the temple of Atibaleshwar in the vicinity, the third is the fort of Pratapgarh.

The first temple, giving its name to the place, is evidently important. Tradition has it that Mahabal and his brother Atibal were great giants and tormentors of Brahmins. Atibal was killed by Vishnu. Mahabal, in revenge, fought Vishnu with all his might, but the latter, receiving the aid of Maya, overpowered the giant. Mahabal surrendered completely and offered himself to be cut to pieces. Moved by this submission, Lord Shiva offered to fulfil the dying wishes of the giant by building two grand temples in memory of the two brothers on the spot where they fought. The temples are thus called Mahabaleshwar and Atibaleshwar. In the temple of Mahabaleshwar, there is mouth of a cow carved in stone. This is supposed to be the source of the five Deccan rivers.

Pratapgarh fort built by the great Shivajee is reputed to be the strongest of the hill forts built and used by him. Killing of Afzal Khan, the general sent by the ruler of Ahmednagar, which is a famous episode not only in Shivajee's life but in the whole of Indian history, took place about half way to the fort. The fort can be reached by motor from Fitzgerald Ghat.

Another very interesting spot in Mahabaleshwar is the Robber's Cave or the Shin Shin Gully. Evidently very ancient and with the mysterious tradition of having been the abode of giants it is a remarkable spot. The cave is still visible through the subterranean passage which has now become impassable on account of its poisonous gases. Tanaji Malusre, one of the generals of Shivajee, is said to have used this place as a shelter.

ROUTE :

Instead of motoring all the way from Poona for about $4\frac{1}{2}$ hours, Mahabaleshwar may also be reached by motor from Wathar railway station which is a shorter distance.

PLACES OF INTEREST :

1. *Wilson Point*—The highest point of Mahabaleshwar (4,710 ft.) about a mile from the bazar. The place is very spacious. Wonderful view of the surrounding plains and hills, even the sea at Ratnagiri, may be sighted on clear days at a distance.
2. *Bombay Point*—About $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles from the bazar, it is a quite spacious and favourite promenade. Pratapgarh Fort can be clearly seen in front. Commands beautiful Sunset view.
3. *Lodwick Point*—There is a fine monument of Genl. Lodwick, the first Englishman to set foot in 1842 in this beautiful, but then dangerous, jungle spot.
4. *Elphinstone Point*—Six miles away from bazar. The strip of land which is Konkan can be seen from this spot.
5. *Arthur Seat*—Eight miles from bazar and two from Elphinstone Point. Arthur Seat and Window Point have been dealt with in the text above.
6. *Babington Point*—One and half miles from the bazar. Beautiful view of Blue Valley can be had.

7. *Connaught Peak*—4,644 ft. high. Commands the view of Krishna Valley and Koyna Valley on either side.

8. *Kate's Point*—Four miles away, on the road to Panchgani. Elephant head Rock and Needle Hole are close by.

9. *Lingamala Fall*—On the way from Panchgani to Mahabaleshwar near the 3rd mile stone. It is the biggest fall around Mahabaleshwar.

10. *Falkland Point*—About half a mile from Bombay Point.

11. *Carnac Point*—Near Bombay Point.

12. *Helen's Point*—Two miles on Blue Valley road.

13. *Savitri Point*—Seven miles from the bazar. Down below river Savitri looks very beautiful.

OTHER PLACES OF INTEREST :

1. Elphinstone Point.
2. Castle Rock.
3. Hunter Point.
4. Government House.
5. Krishna Temple.

Everyone of the 'points', referred to above, affords excellent view. There are also several waterfalls in and around Mahabaleshwar.

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HOTELS AND LODGINGS :

1. Paradise Hotel.
2. Dreamland Hotel.
3. Ripon Hotel.
4. Guest House.
5. Dave Hotel, etc.

The hotels are mostly very big, each accommodating not less than 250 individuals, and cater both vegetarian and non-vegetarian food.

Race View Hotel and Frederich Hotel are the best in European style. There are many good ones in Indian style, both vegetarian and non-vegetarian.

HOLIDAY CAMP : This is Government of Bombay establishment of A, B & C Class accommodation of furnished blocks on nominal rent. This is open to all.

There are :—

Class " A " (3 or 4 rooms) — 9 blocks.

Class " B " (2 rooms) —17 blocks.

Class " C " (Single room) —32 blocks.

Application is to be made to Executive Engineer,
Poona East Dn.

PANCHGANI

Just as Kurseong is to Darjeeling, Solon to Simla or Coonoor to Ooty, so is Panchgani to Mahabaleshwar, that is, a second smaller hill station on way to the main hill station. As is well known, Mahabaleshwar is the Summer Resort of the Governor of Maharashtra State. Mahabaleshwar is only 12 miles further up from Panchgani. Elevation of the former is about 4,500 ft., whereas that of Panchgani is 4,378 ft.

Mahabaleshwar, though much more extensive and commodious than Panchgani, suffers from a serious handicap. Its rainfall is excessive. It has the highest rainfall among all hill stations of India which ranges from 300 to 400 inches. It is, thus, second only to Cherapunji! In consequence the station becomes completely deserted soon after the Monsoon breaks in the first week of June. Even the shops close down. Thus, a second station near at hand without the particular drawback was a great need and Panchgani nicely fulfils it. The rainfall of here is between 70 to 80 inches only. Being, moreover, of about the same elevation, it too is pleasantly cool in Summer. It is slightly less cold and also less often darkened by fogs than Mahabaleshwar.

Mr. John Chesson, an Englishman, first settled at Panchgani in about 1850. In 1882, more Europeans from Poona, about 24 in number, settled down. This was followed by some Parsi gentleman, mostly from Bombay, and the town has been steadily, though slowly, growing up.

Attracted by its bracing climate, Dr. Billimoria of Bombay established a T.B. Sanatorium at the edge of the hill on an extensive plot of land, measuring about 40 acres, and named it "Bel-Air Sanatorium", which is open to patients of all communities. This became very popular and made the place well-known.

The natural beauty of Panchgani is considerable and some rate it higher than even Mahabaleshwar. The Western edge of the town drops down abruptly to thousands of feet and the beautiful Krishna Valley is visible all along—the river winding its course like a silver ribbon. The earth here is of red colour with little undergrowth. So, the villages standing in the valley on the red land with graceful trees standing all about look very tiny and pretty from the height of Panchgani. Moreover, the effect of light and shade created by gathering and dispersing clouds is very fine to watch.

The Eastern side of the town is completely shut up by a high wall-like mountain, rising straight up and stretching over a mile. Strangely, the top of this hill is absolutely flat and it has, thus, justly come to be known as the famous Tableland of Panchgani. Climbing up, one finds a vast grassy lawn, stretching for over 3 miles, which reminds one irresistibly of the famous Calcutta Maidan, the sporting centre of Calcutta. This is a strange freak of nature and is certainly unique in India.

The Europeans utilised the slightly undulating part as Golf Course. It is generally claimed that the Golf Course at Gulmarg in Kashmir is the best natural Golf Course in India. The Panchgani Course, though not so well-known, looks exactly like the same. In this vast Tableland not a single tree stands anywhere, not even any shrubs. At one place, there is a shallow sheet of water.

A fine motor road has been constructed recently by the Municipality upto this excellent spot, adding greatly to the amenity of the town. The height of the Tableland from the town is about 250 ft. When one reaches there, one finds that all the ranges of the Western Ghats surrounding it are mostly below it. So, one feels to be on the top of the earth. Evidently, the air here is unsurpassable for health.

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Panchgani has as many as eight residential schools and convents run on European lines. St. Peters for boys and St. Josephs for girls are the biggest missionary schools. Apart from these, there are Hindu, Muslim and Parsi denominational residential schools too. Sanjiwan Vidyalyay for Hindus, Anjuman High School for Muslims and Billimoria High School for Parsis are big schools. All these schools utilise slices of the tableland for their games and there are enough and to spare.

Panchgani may well be proud of its tall silver oak trees. About 200 ft. tall, silver oaks stand almost everywhere. Strangely, this tree is not found even at Mahabaleshwar. According to some, the air of this tree is good for lungs and so for T.B. patients. The altitude, moderate temperature throughout the year and rainfall are undoubtedly other suitable factors.

Besides the T.B. Sanatorium, there are other fine Sanatoriums for visitors built for Borah, Khoja and Parsi communities by benefactors of these religions.

The normal route is *via* Poona Railway Station from where it is 63 miles motor journey over beautiful tarred road surmounting three ridges of the Western Ghats.

Though not exactly a plateau, Panchgani has much level space for a hill station. The slight slope does not affect cultivation. Mr. Chesson's fruit garden is famous.

The shopping centre is on the main street. Decent shops, restaurants, etc., are sufficient for the needs of the place. The beautiful Parsi Fire Temple is a prominent land mark.

The very fine Municipal Garden, and the children's Park attaches, with very finely laid out flower garden is the main rendezvous of visitors morning and evening.

There is plenty of hotel accommodation suitable practically for all communities and there are several beauty spots or 'points' resorted to by visitors.

PLACES OF INTEREST :

Sydney Point—It is a roundish hillock with a road going up to the top from where lovely view of the valley on two sides and Sunset may be had. Being within easy reach of the town, it is very popular.

Parsi Point—Exactly on the other end of the town. It is a nice spot where the hill side drops abruptly to the plains, over a thousand feet below. Commands very nice view.

Kach Bowri—About a mile from the shopping centre, it is a nice spot where seats are provided under a clump of shady trees.

Baby Point—Within very easy reach—seats have been provided for the convenience of children.

Meherbaba Cave—At a secluded spot, not far from Kach Bowrie, overlooking the valley.

Table-Land—Already dealt with in the text above.

HOTELS AND LODGINGS :

1. Il Plazo Hotel.
2. Prospect Hotel.
3. Mount View Hotel.
4. The Grange.
5. Gujrat Lodge.
6. Anand Bhawan.
7. Surti Lodge.
8. Fairy Belle, etc.

MATHERAN

Citizens of Bombay are very fortunate, as compared to those in Calcutta or Madras, in having the hill stations of Mahabaleshwar, Panchgani and Matheran within easy reach, besides semi hill stations like Khandala and Lonavla.

Only 87 Kilometers by rail from Bombay on the Bombay-Poona road is Narel railway station. From here runs a narrow gauge railway line of 43 Kilometers to Matheran.

It is a pity that there is no motor road as yet from Narel to Matheran. Thus, the railway forms the sole link. This prevents visit by car straight from Bombay, although so near, while the more distant hill stations of Mahabaleshwar and Panchgani are visited by car direct.

Matheran is a beautiful town of broad roads, lined by lovely bungalows almost each surrounded by extensive flower gardens. As the roads are mostly undulating, no motor cars, even bicycles, are permitted to ply in the town. Hence, a peaceful atmosphere prevails.

The railway stops working during the Monsoon with the result that Matheran is completely cut off from the outside world during several months. This hill station seems to be unique in this respect throughout India. But it fully hums with life during the gruelling summer of Bombay and in lovely autumn.

To compensate for the lack of motors or cycles, there are plenty of beautiful horses available on hire which are extensively made use of by visitors of all ages for visits to the numerous beauty spots surrounding the place. Most of them overlook the valleys and plains below. There are rickshaws here, unlike Mahabaleshwar or Panchgani which have none.

Matheran may well be proud of its Charlotte Lake which is decidedly a charming spot. This is naturally the rendezvous of visitors.

There is plenty of hotel accommodation to suit all tastes and pockets during the seasons.

The roads of the town are not yet tarred. A road link from Narel and tarring of the roads are overdue.

Elevation being only 2,700 ft., the place is naturally warmer than the other hill stations.

PLACES OF INTEREST :

1. *Panorama Point*—About 6 miles away, it is the best beauty spot.
2. *Sunset Point*—About $4\frac{1}{2}$ miles away, it provides charming sunset view.
3. *Chalk Point*—About 2 miles away.
4. *Louisa Point*—A very charming spot indeed.

HOTELS AND LODGINGS :

1. Rugby Hotel.
2. Ritz Hotel.
3. Regal Hotel.
4. Mahratta Lodge, etc.

KHANDALA AND LONAVLA

The magnificent precipices and headlands of the Western Ghats look like colossal landing stairs from the sea. On this unique camel's back stand two lovely spots Khandala and Lonavla, Bombay's most popular holiday and picnic resorts. Two hours' drive over a beautifully built concrete road takes the visitor to the topmost point of the lengthy 'Ghats'. The two picture-like townships stand side by side on this top level.

The natural beauty of Khandala providing wide landscapes on both sides of the ridge far away and below is unrivalled. Just after the motorist has negotiated the beautiful Bhoreghat, he suddenly comes across the little toy-house-like township of Khandala. Not only its beauty but the welcome change in its climate and the distinct nip in the air refresh the tired traveller.

A grand sight enhances the charm of Khandala sufficiently. This is its grand waterfall with a drop of 300 feet. It is grandest during the monsoons.

Three miles away is Lonavla which is a somewhat bigger township. Apart from its neatness, bracing air and natural beauty, its importance lies also as the nearest township to the famous Karla caves. The Bhaja and Bedsa caves, too, are near about. Karla is the largest *chaitya* cave in India. Dating from 160 B.C., 124 feet deep, 45 feet broad and 48 feet high, the main cave temple is well preserved. This and the other neighbouring caves look no more than bee-hives not only from Lonavla but also from the very foot of the steep hills. Reaching up one is, therefore, almost overwhelmed by its vastness and the grandeur of the carvings.

PLACES OF INTEREST

The beauty spots are :

Khandala : (a) Duke's Nose

(b) Byramji Point

- Lonavla : (a) Tiger Leap
(b) Valvan
(c) Bhushi Lake

CLIMATE

Being only about 2,000 ft. in elevation, the climate is ideally suited for those advanced in years for whom higher altitude is mostly unsuitable. The comparatively cool and crisp air for those coming from big cities like Bombay is nerve-soothing. Moreover, the spick and span neatness of the places and extremely picturesque setting of the pretty small bungalows standing at a comfortable distance from each other give the whole thing a children's picture book atmosphere. Nature is also kind for most parts of the year. The only exception is the 3 months of extremely heavy rains. But these too, with the ideal natural drainage of the steep hill sides, should not be otherwise very inconvenient.

HOTELS AND LODGINGS

There are quite a number of hotels and small bungalows in each place available to visitors.

MOUNT KAILASH AND MANSAROVAR

To a Hindu, great sanctity is attached to mount Kailash and the lake of Mansarovar adjacent to it. Kailash is believed to be the abode of Lord Shiva and many Jain Tirthankars obtained Nirvana upon it. Many Buddhists regard mount Kailash as the dwelling place of Bodhisattavas.

The situation of this great pair is in the trans-Himalayan region near Tibet. There are three routes : (1) *via* Badrinath by Hoty-Nity Pass, (2) the Darma route and (3) the Johar route. The route from Badrinath is the longest and most difficult. The Darma route is the shortest but full of steep climbs. The Johar route is not only the easiest but full of sublime beauty. Every-one of the routes has to negotiate one or two passes of the Himalayas which remain ice-bound almost half of the year. June to September is the brief period when one may expect to cross this difficult terrain. Shipki pass can be reached from Simla by the Hindustan-Tibet road.

This part of the world has little in common with the familiar world of ours. It has no vegetation, no corn fields, no animals, not even humanity. This is a region of limitless ice and snow, the nature and grandeur of which can hardly be adequately described or realised. The following lines from Corporal Ridley, East Surrey Regiment, who made the trip with a few companions in July 1936 will be of interest :

“ Far to the East descending shadows stole across the great granite dome of Kamat, a host of lesser peaks stood silhouetted against the sky line. In graciousness and symmetry of shape they seemed the executions of some master hand. To the West the last rays of the setting sun tinged virgin snows with gold.....
.....The far-off murmurs of the torrent in the valley below seemed like

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 some melody that added to the serene peace. How true are the words of the Hindu sage of old : " In a thousand ages of the gods I could not tell thee of the glories of Himachal where Shiva lived and where the Ganges fell from the feet of Vishnu like the slender thread of the lotus flower.....

.....It was after a difficult climb that we made the crest. We found rewards of our efforts, however, in the glorious view which unfolded itself over us. We gazed upon virgin wastes of snow upon myriads of peaks, upon great glaciers that swept down from the peaks and disappeared in the labyrinth of the wilderness. A scene of rugged grandeur and majesty of power, yet full of great beauty and a quiet peace."

Mount Kailash is, perhaps, the most regular shaped peak in existence. Its huge cylindrical shape has curiously the form of a Shiva Lingam. It is covered with perpetual snow. Can we imagine that its base has the circumference of 32 miles! Devout pilgrims—Hindus, Buddhists and Jains—do not fail to circumambulate it completely. It is 22,028 feet high.

Dr Sven Hedin, the well known Swedish explorer, though a Christian, was also strangely imbued with the same reverence. He remarks :

" The stranger approaches the holy Kailash with a feeling of awe. It is incomparably the most famous mountain in the world. Mount Everest and Mont Blanc cannot vie with it ".....

August Ganser says, " The fundamental idea of Asiatic religions is embodied in one of the most significant temples I had ever seen, a sunlit rock and ice. Its remarkable structure and peculiar harmony of its shape justify my speaking of Kailash as the most sacred mountain in the world.....the most holiest mountain and the sublime throne of the gods."

The holy Mansarovar lake with perfectly blue waters is also very vast. The circumference is more than 50 miles and its depth, nearly 300 feet. Situated at an unearthly height of 15,000 feet and wonderfully set between the two grand peaks, Kailash and Mandhata, its pure waters are enchantingly soothing. It has even aquatic birds swimming over it—the swan-like big ducks being a speciality.

There are eight big Buddhist monasteries along the shore.

Dr Sven Hedin speaking of Mansarovar says, "Mansarovar is the abode of sanctity and peace..... Not language on earth contains words forcible enough to describe the view. I too was the victim of an illusion which almost made me catch at the parapet for supportI should have liked to remain under its enchantment—Mansarovar is the pearl of all the lakes in the world and oh ! what a wonderful lake. I have no words to describe it."

Many other spiritually-minded persons experienced divine consciousness and even had visions in these wonderful regions.

KASHMIR

Since the introduction of Hill concession by Indian Railways there has been quite an exodus of Indians to Kashmir. There is return journey concession in the motor journey too from Pathankot to Srinagar. The road journey across Banihal Pass takes practically 2 days with a night's halt *enroute*. This long hill journey on wheels is nerve-racking for most visitors. But the trouble can be eliminated completely by doing the trip by Air from Pathankot or Jammu to Srinagar. In just one hour from Pathankot, one is transported to the land of heart's desire. Going in summer from the blazing Indian plains, how sweetly cool one feels the gentle breeze on alighting in Srinagar airfield, 5,000 ft. above sea level—quite a caressing welcome to the enchanting valley!

Within 5 minutes of take off, the Indian plains disappear from view and ranges over ranges of Kashmir hills spread out below. In another quarter of an hour they too slip away and are replaced by a gigantic green-topped billiard table of 94 square miles—the world's famous valley of Kashmir.

The hills to the south have receded to the farthest distance now on the horizon. On the north appear others with lovely glistening snow on crest. On the east and west too are long lines of hills with patches of snow or bundles of white clouds on top. Over the lovely green plain run streams of molten silver in fascinating curves and the whole land is bathed pure with the softest sunshine. Is there a man so dead in feeling who is not enthralled by this enchanting panorama!

A few minutes more and the plane is over the famous Banihal Pass. The old tunnel was almost near the summit of the hill. Because of its high altitude, it remains ice-bound in winter. Hence the need for a second all-weather tunnel dug out recently a few hundred feet below.

Almost immediately is seen a vast sheet of water nestling among pretty hills. Simultaneously rises the cry of the passengers 'Dal Lake,' 'Dal Lake'! How placid is the limpid water shining like a mirror in sunshine, how pretty the trees round the edge and how pleasing the blue hills and the white palaces set among them here and there! In no time, the plane hovers over the Jhelum river and the piles of houses on both banks of famous Srinagar arrest the attention of the visitor.

Congested though the city is, its situation is certainly unique. The visitor reaching it by road cannot realise this so much as one coming by plane.

On the horizon shines the high range of virgin snow followed by ranges over ranges of hills mantled all over by dark green deodars. These slope down gradually to green meadows reaching to the very edge of the rapid flowing Jhelum. The river flows beneath seven lovely wooden bridges. The charming Dal Lake with small floating islands on its bosom is just behind the city and the whole is watched over by two shapely hills, like sentinels at two ends—the Shankaracharya hill and Hariparbat. On the top of Shankaracharya hill is a bell-shaped neat little temple, the bluish stone walls of which look as fresh as when built. The whole top of Hariparbat is occupied by a fort with waving walls around. Is not the situation unique?

The distance from the aerodrome to the City is about 6 miles. Before long, the road becomes nicely shaded by big trees, but these are not our Indian trees, but quite different. Prominent among them is the white-trunked poplar, locally known as "shafeda"—neat straight trunks topped by profuse foliage.

Strangely, there is no rank vegetation underneath these trees. Everything is spick and span. There are plenty of grass lawns with tufts of violet lilies here and there.

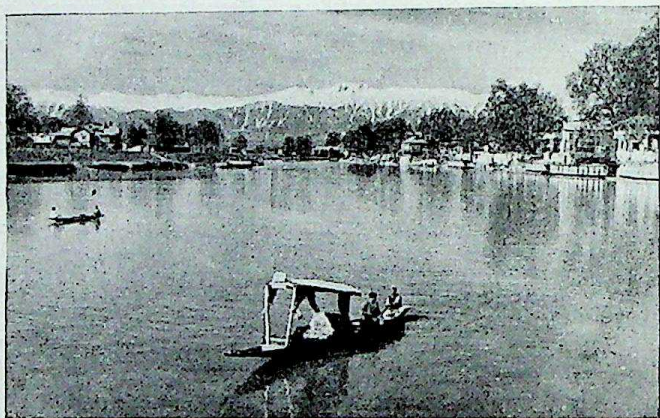
Soon come, one by one, the garden houses of the rich, nice bungalows surrounded by flower and fruit gardens. The roofs have wooden tiles, a new thing for the visitor. The flowers are mostly English season flowers and the fruit trees are apples, pears, peaches, apricots, plums and cherries.

The occupants of these bungalows are of very fair complexion nicely featured and full of health and beauty. It is difficult to tell the Hindu from the Muslim. When, however, the city is reached in a few minutes, it becomes apparent that about 90% of the population is Moslem. The office of the Airlines Corporation is in the heart of the city, very near Pratap Singh Park, two broad roads running on two sides. The first road is the famous Amira Kadal, home of most of the elegant shops and hotels of Srinagar.

The next important road in Srinagar is the one running on the right bank of the Jhelum—the Bund Road. Facing the river on this road are elegant shops in European style mostly within charming gardens, many shops of Kashmir handicrafts, the G. P. O., etc. On the river are house-boats berthed in the shade of lofty chinar trees on the bank. These trees have made the road nicely shady and beautiful.

This part of Srinagar upto the first bridge is the modern town, very neat and lovely. A little beyond is the excellent polo ground where the Sadar-e-Rayasat himself plays. Almost facing it are the Radio Station and Nedous Hotel—the premier hotel of the town. The nice little triangular flower garden known as Sher-e-Kashmir park, reminiscent of Sheikh Abdulla's regime, the extensive fine grounds and gardens of the Regency and Chinar avenues here and there have combined to make the locality charming indeed. But this is so only upto the first Bridge. Beyond this upto the seventh bridge is congestion and sordidness. There are only one or two roads and these too, narrow and overcrowded. Is it for this reason that the Jhelum

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 is the main thoroughfare of Srinagar? Countless beautiful Shikaras ply night and day, vendors too are on Shikaras—the flower seller, fruit seller and vegetable seller, shawl merchant, photo-goods man and even the post office! Shikaras are small boats sufficient only for a couple of men.



Shikara on the Jhelum, Kashmir.

*“ Who has not heard of the Vale of Cashmere ;
 With its Roses the brightest that earth ever gave,
 Its Temples and Grottos and Mountains as clear,
 As the love lighted eyes that hang over their wave.”*

Moore

It is lucky that, unlike their Moslem sisters, the Hindu Kashmiri ladies (*panditayins*) are not behind purdah. So, in the afternoon, even the most congested quarters of the city become invitingly beautiful with most beautiful feminine faces imaginable in every window or street corner. Aquiline, almost parrot like noses, dark wide charming bashful eyes and the loveliest of complexion make each face a perfect lotus.

The beauty of Moslem ladies can very well be imagined from the children who play about in the street. The working class Moslems have, however, little purdah. Even the boatman has such beautiful ladies and girls about him as to astound the visitor at times.

The chinar tree is called the Royal tree of Kashmir. It is said that none can be felled without Government permission. The trunks are as massive as those of the Banyan, but, unlike the Banyan, the chinar trunk is nicely circular in shape and goes straight up to considerable height before the luxuriously profuse and beautifully shaped thin leaves spread out. The leaves grow so thick that sun rays can hardly penetrate. Cool and pleasant as the breeze of Kashmir is in summer, in the shade of the majestic chinar it becomes pleasanter still. The air of the chinar tree is reputed to be healthy too.

One of the interesting things of Srinagar, well known outside Kashmir, is the house-boat. The Dal Lake, especially the Dal Gate, is pack full of them and the Jhelum has plenty too. Except, perhaps, Grandharbal, they are nowhere else in Kashmir. A house-boat is like a floating house with drawing-room, bed-rooms, dining-room, pantry and bath complete—nicely decorated and furnished like a rich man's house. There is electric lighting too connected with the shore. Hence the boats cannot be easily moved about. A Shikara is attached to every house-boat, for small trips, and another country boat is attached as kitchen and the servants' quarters. So it is a costly affair. The flat roof has iron or wooden railing and is furnished with flower pots.

A canvas shamiana shuts out the sun and deck chairs make the place quite inviting. For a party of four, the daily charge for boarding and lodging is about Rs. 40 to Rs. 60 per day. The boatwalas are all Moslems, speak broken English and are excellent cooks.

Country boats called "Doongas" are also available. They have rooms too, but are without furniture. A big percentage of Kashmiri population lives in these Doongas almost throughout their lives, with cattle too! Nowhere else in India is there such floating population as in or about Srinagar.

Dal Lake is outside Srinagar town. This famous lake is three to four miles in length and over a mile broad. It is connected with the Jhelum by a channel about half a mile long. It is, perhaps, the smallest surface of water in the world glorified with the appellation of a lake.

Why is Dal Lake so famous? Kashmir is the pleasure resort of people from India and outside India and Dal Lake in Srinagar is the pleasure resort of all visitors to Kashmir. Dal is beautiful too. Its limpid clear water is beautiful, beautiful are the surrounding hills and the sparkling snow beyond, beautiful are the secluded water lanes and creeks between the shore and the floating gardens, beautiful are the famous Moghul Gardens—Shalimar, Nishat and Nasim which rise step by step on its banks and, most of all, beautiful is the soft cool air on the bosom of the lake, because of its 5,000 ft. altitude and position among the hills. When the lotus and the water lily on the lake are in bloom the beauty is enhanced still. Said an English visitor of old :

"If the lily of the sun by day and the lily of the moon by night are in flower the traveller will see something worth remembering."

A secluded part of the lake is known as Nagina Lake where the British had built a beautiful club house.

On the water too, they had placed two house-boats for the exclusive use of swimmers and bathers. Bathing suits and life-belts are available on hire and there are dressing rooms and a restaurant. In the afternoon, it is delightful to watch boys, girls, men and women enjoying water sports here. The water in summer is not at all uncomfortably cold.

Surf-riding is an interesting item of sport. A plank of wood is fastened on to a motor launch. One has to stand up on the plank holding a rope as reins and keep on standing when the launch is driven fast. Every failure to keep position raises laughter from the bystanders. The Dal Gate is full of charming house-boats and shikaras. In the Nehru Park, a fine building houses a rest house, indoor games, restaurant, etc., and is very popular.

The floating gardens of the Dal Lake are unique. They look exactly like small islands with cultivated fields and peasants' huts on them. Some are as big or bigger than an acre, but it is strange that they can be moved about from place to place. A kind of tough water weed grows below the water of the Dal. It is collected and allowed to dry up in the sun. The collections are then floated and the lake-mud is thrown on them. The weeds are so tough that they do not give way. When the mud dries up gradually, it becomes fit for cultivation. The products of these gardens, *viz.*, spinach, tomatoes, cucumbers, etc., grow luxuriously big in size because of the water below. The fields are placed in position by fastening them to poles planted in the water. Cases of theft of these gardens or part of them are not rare!

In the words of the ancient Persian poet :—

“Subah dar bag-e-Nishat
Sham dar bag-e-Nasim
Shalamar-O-Lalajar O
Shaer-e-Kashmir ast o bas”

"Enjoyment of Nishat in the morning, Nasim in the afternoon, Shalimar and tulip fields are enough for a visit to Kashmir." Moghul Emperors, Akbar, Jahangir and Shahjehan had created these exquisite gardens. One cannot enough admire their thirst for beauty and fine taste displayed.

The gardens being on the slopes of the banks rise higher and higher step by step. Through the centre of Nishat and Shalimar run fountains of the finest drinking water. Similar fountains are also found in Achhabul garden and Chasma-Shahi garden which are some distance away. These are natural springs. Nice water-ways have been constructed with rows of fountains which keep on spraying water night and day. Fruit and flower gardens are on either side of the water, loveliest English flowers and choicest Kashmir fruits. On holidays, it is a rare sight to watch hundreds of boats on the Dal with Kashmiri men, women and children in gayest colours wending their way to the gardens. The Vrindaban Garden of Mysore at Krishnarajasagara Dam is larger and the fountains too are bigger and more beautiful. But what that famous garden lacks is the unique setting of these Moghul gardens—snow-capped mountains on top and the charming Dal Lake at the foot.

After the Dal Lake and the gardens, the visit to Srinagar will be incomplete without climbing the two hills, Hariparbat and Shankaracharya hill. The view from the latter is unforgettable. Wrote an old English traveller :—

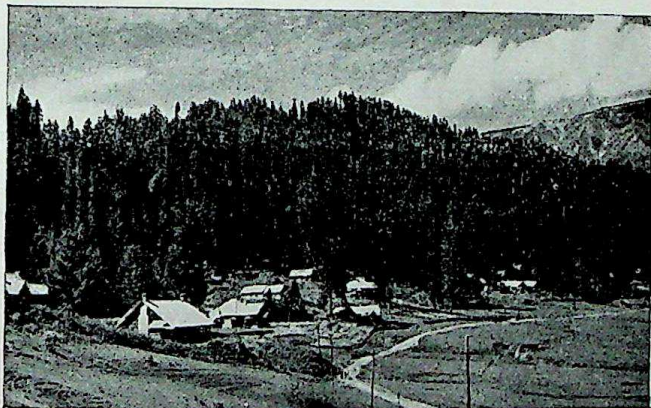
"From the terrace I beheld the great view of Kashmir—a prospect which is certainly one of the finest I have ever seen in any country which I suppose must be one of the finest in the world."

The Muslims named the top 'Takhat-e-Suleman' or the throne of Solomon. It is really worthy to be so.

The following are the various other places of interest in Kashmir.

GULMARG

The name of Gulmarg, which is only 28 miles of bus drive from Srinagar, must be familiar to many. The asphalted road, after it emerges from the city, runs remarkably straight for miles and miles through rice fields. Lined on either side by white-trunked, straight, slender poplars, this 24-mile long road is one of the most beautiful avenues to be found anywhere. The background of snow-capped ranges at a distance endows it with idyllic charm. Tangmarg, where the road ends, is at the foothills. The next 4 miles of the hill road under shady deodars can be negotiated either on foot or on horseback. Ponies can be had for hire.



Gulmarg, Kashmir.

Gulmarg, meaning field of flowers, is an extensive meadow at 8,000 ft. height. The road runs onward across the field on one side of which is the finest natural golf course in the world and a pologround on the other. Skirting the meadow are high grounds on which stand European style shops, hotels and fine wooden bungalows on one side and dense deodars on the other side. Wild flowers abound here and there.

At this cool height, it is the most favourite resort of Europeans in Kashmir. A seven miles round walk, eminently suitable for riding, is available close at hand with remarkable vistas of snow ranges in front. Both the air and water of Gulmarg are excellent. Is not this an abode of peace and pleasure ?

KHILENMARG

Four miles further up is Khilenmarg, which is a 11,000 feet high flat hill top completely covered with snow. The snow slopes down for a mile or so. Hill-men offer wooden sledges for hire. On the snow the sledge goes down very fast and the ride is quite exciting. There is a Ski-Club in a wooden hut on top.

The view from Khilenmarg is more enthralling than even from Shankaracharya Hill. The 26,260 feet high Nangaparnbat—snow-clad from top to bottom—stands majestically in front. It is among the topmost of earth's heights. At a distance the blue waters of Wular Lake are seen nestling beautifully among the surrounding hills. The Jhelum is clearly seen running into and emerging out of the Lake. Alpathar mountain, fully covered with snow, stands behind. The view is one of the finest imaginable.

On the slopes of Khilenmarg, wherever the snow has melted, bunches of light-coloured flowers have sprung up as if from nowhere.

KHIRBHAWANI

Twenty-five miles from Srinagar in another direction is the famous Hindu temple of Khirbhawani. The bus fare is Re. 1 per trip but on each Ashtamiday (*i.e.*, 8th Day of the Moon) the concession fare of 50 nP. only is charged. Large crowds visit the temple throughout the year.

The small temple of goddess Bhawani is surrounded by a deep pool full of water. Milk is the favourite offering of the goddess here and is, therefore, offered in large quantities and is all thrown into the water. The temple has a spacious compound fully paved with stone and nicely bordered with iron railings and chinar trees. The temple is very ancient and was almost in ruins for long till Swami Vivekananda brought the matter to the notice of Kashmir Government and had it renovated. The Swamiji is reputed to have offered 20 maunds of milk as offering to the goddess!

GANDHARBAL

On the way to Khir Bhawani, 13 miles from Srinagar, is the quiet locality of Gandharbal on the Jhelum. The road passes over a bridge on the river. On both sides of the stream are pleasant meadows. Water of Gandharbal is more digestive than that of Srinagar. The air, too, is more conducive to health. Many health seekers therefore keep their houseboats for long periods at this place. Fishing can be had too.

MANASBAL LAKE

Beyond Gandharbal on the way to Wular is Manasbal lake. The lake is smaller than the Dal but is quite pretty and full of lotus flowers. Around the lake are charming hills. The scenery is beautiful.

WULAR LAKE

31 miles from Srinagar is Wular. Known to every Indian School boy, it is the largest fresh water lake in India. The vast sheet of water is partially enclosed by hills. Except from the air, entry of the Jhelum into the lake and its exit from it at the other end cannot be seen simultaneously. Many fishing boats are seen plying on the lake. Strangely, there is a shower of rain with high winds almost every evening. So rowing on the lake in the evening should be avoided.

BANDIPUR

A few miles beyond Wular is Bandipur—a small township on the Jhelum—famous for production of *pattu* cloth.

BARAMULA

Further up is the town of Baramula. Close to the town are extensive open grounds and broad roads. Since the frontier of Pakistan-occupied Kashmir is near, the place is full of military activity.

Baramula was the scene of many engagements during the attack on Kashmir. The beautiful memorials erected here in sacred memory of Lt.-Col. Ranjit Rai of the Indian Army and Sherwani, a Kashmiri, are well worth a visit. Lt.-Col. Rai was from Punjab and fell in battle after unique heroism. Sherwani posed as a friend of the attackers and held up their advance under false pretences sufficiently long for reinforcements from India to arrive. For this "treachery", he was nailed to the wall alive by the enemy and killed!

SONEMARG

Sonemarg is 60 miles away from Srinagar in the Sind valley. The road goes for the most part by the side of the swift-flowing Sind river. After a few miles, human habitation disappears completely and the scenery is wild. The view of the foaming river amid rugged hills and forest is captivating. Nearer Sonemarg, the road has to cross a ridge covered with perpetual snow. The ice has been cut out and the road passes between ice-walls! Unique experience for the visitor but not at all uncomfortably cold!

One wonders on reaching Sonemarg that for all its fame it is so bare and lonely. In the lovely grass-covered valley between two grass-mantled hills stand a lonely dak bungalow and a derelict caravan-serai.

Sonemarg is a favourite resort of our Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru. Evidently, the restful, quiet and healthy climate of the place attracts him to this far corner of Kashmir. Attractive, too, is its gold-coloured grass on the valley and hill sides from which it seems to have derived its name.

Another attraction of the place is the Sonemarg Glacier. Ponies are available for visiting the glacier some three miles away behind the hill. As the last bend of the hill is over, the sudden view of a high hill clothed in white from head to foot almost overwhelms the visitor. With some caution, the hill can be climbed on foot. At the foot of the hill an ice-bridge is found. Water is visible below through an opening in the ice. The water flows by a channel underneath the ice and emerges at a distance. Such ice-bridges are found elsewhere too in the ice-bound regions of Kashmir. The one at Chandanwari on way to Amarnath is well-known.

PAHALGAM

Sixty miles north of Srinagar is Pahalgam, reputed for its health and charm. At the height of 7,500 feet, it is a valley completely enclosed by 12 high peaks. Here is a pocket-size township with electric lighting derived from a local hydro-electric arrangement.

Round about the town, there are many grass-covered pretty hillocks. On these are pitched in summer countless comfortable tents under the shade of pines or deodars. So, Pahalgam has the appearance of a city of tents in summer. The rent for the tents for average families is about Rs. 100-00 including ground rent, electricity and furniture.

The Lidar river enters the valley and passes through the centre in three beautiful impetuous streams. Five wooden bridges span the streams beautifying the place considerably. Ponies are available at all hours for

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moving about the beautiful valley or for trekking to the
beauty spots in the neighbouring hills, *viz.*, Baisaran,
Aru, Shikarga or Chandanwari.

Even in the month of May, all the 12 peaks are
completely covered with snow! The beauty of the
valley at this time is unique. Even foreign visitors
stand agape at this unforgettable spectacle. As the
summer sets in, the snows melt away.

The pines and deodars at Pahalgam are so profuse
and grow so densely that one rarely finds its like
elsewhere. All this and especially the bubbling waters
of the Lidar invest the place with a charm all its own.
It is an ideal holiday resort in all respects. Many
visitors come here every summer and spend 5/6 months
in tents with considerable benefit both to the body
and to the mind. To derive full benefit one should
bring one's own servants. The local servants mostly do
not understand Hindustani or Urdu.

There are more than half a dozen decent hotels
here—Pahalgam Hotel, Khalsa Hotel, Pine Hotel,
Plaza, Himalaya Hotel, Lidarview Hotel, etc. The
charges vary and compare favourably with those in
any big Indian town.

Pahalgam Club, which was created by Britishers,
continues to function and provides excellent facilities
for club life and games of all kinds in charming
surroundings. It also has a library and a fine garden.

KOLOHAI GLACIER

Kolohai is 17 miles from Pahalgam. The peak is
17,800 ft. high and the glacier is very extensive.
Climbing up is full of risk, especially because of the
cracks in the snow which appear unexpectedly. There
is a rest house for stay overnight.

PAMPUR

On the route to Pahalgam from Srinagar after the first 7/8 miles appear the fine open fields of Pampur on both sides of the road. This is the only spot in Kashmir where saffron is grown. In October, the visitor will feast his eyes with the rare view of blooming saffron flowers. The saffron coloured veil covers the earth for acres and the air is full of fine fragrance.

AVANTIPUR

A little further ahead by the roadside stand the stone ruins of Avantipur palace—once the capital of Hindu Kings.

MATAN

About half way to Pahalgam, a mile or so away from the route, on a small hill, are the most famous ruins of all Kashmir—the ruins of the old MARTANDA temple, *i.e.*, the sun temple. Even in ruins the temple is vast and imposing. The temple dates from 699-705 A.D. It was built by kings Ramaditya and Lalitaditya.

ANANTANAG

About 5 miles ahead of Matan are the temple and the city of Anantanag. There is little imposing about the temple except its sulphur springs, quiet garden and family of ancient Pandas with their massive record books.

ACHHABAL

A little away from the main route is Achhabal garden which has grown round a voluminous spring of the finest water. The garden is in three terraces, beautifully shady with big trees and is well maintained.

VERINAG

The Moghal garden of Verinag, too, centres round a spring. It was the first garden in Kashmir built by

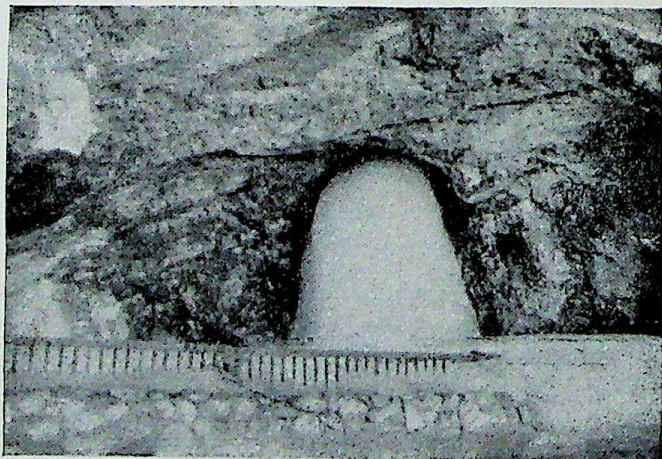
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Moghul Emperors. It is said that Emperor Jehangir expressed the wish that his remains should be interred in this fine garden. The Emperor died in a little village in Rajwari taluk during his return to India from one of his annual trips to Kashmir.

KOKARNAG

The water of the spring at Kokarnag is reputed to be the best for health in Kashmir. It is an out of the way place and so is little frequented.

AMARANATH CAVE

The famous Amarnath cave is 27 miles beyond Pahalgam, which is the last township *en route*. So, pilgrims to the cave foregather here and make necessary preparations. The Government officials here control supply of ponies and dandies and take severe action against any misbehaviour by poniwalas or dandiwalas. The road is very bad, steep and dangerous at places.



The Snow Lingam, Amarnath, Kashmir.

In fact, it can hardly be called a road—it is a pony track mostly dangerous even for the ponies in bad weather. Majority of pilgrims cover the distance on foot and find it more convenient than on ponies. The main *Darshan day* of the Ice-Lingam is the full moon day of Sravan (July/ August) when Kashmir Government make arrangements for safety and comfort of pilgrims. The cave and its approaches remain completely snow-bound except for three to four months in the year.

Those who do not care for Government facilities go for *darshan* even earlier. Many go for the full moon day of Ashar (June/July) and have to walk on long stretches on snow.

The weather in some years turns out to be so inclement that even in spite of Government arrangements hundreds of men and ponies lose their lives in cold and blizzard. This happened in 1928.

The distance of 28 miles is covered in four stages. The first halt is at Chandanwari, the second at Sheshnag, the third at Panchtarni and the final one at the cave. The ice-bridge at fine open surroundings of Chandanwari, the unsurpassable beauty of the lake amid ice and snow at Sheshnag and the beauty of the snow-covered hills near Panchtarni charm the visitors. Many beautiful flowers and strange herbs are found on the way.

The hill cave at Amarnath is quite spacious and roomy above. So intense is the cold of the place that the cave remains fully ice-bound except during the two months of summer, when the snow gradually melts away leaving the Ice-Lingam intact. It is strange that a pair of pigeons are always found in the cave.

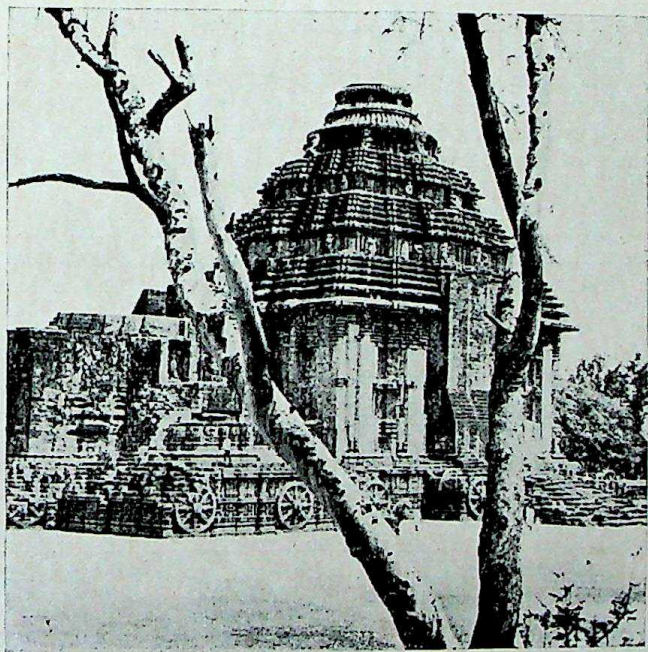
Apart from rare combination of snow-capped hills, lovely grassy plains, graceful rice fields and countless streams of limpid water, fed by melting ice all round,

the beauty of Kashmir has been enhanced considerably by the unique neatness of the valley and rows and rows of beautifully white poplars, fine willows and stately chinars on all sides. Is it not wonderful that, in the whole of the 90 square miles of area, there is not even one unsightly shrub or bush anywhere? Everything seems freshly swept and tidied. Add to these the beauty of the human figures, especially of the fairer sex, and of the lovely flowers, tulip, poppy and cherry. All these indeed make one feel at times and cry out with the Persian poet—"If there is a heaven on earth it is here—it is here."

KONARAK

It is a well known feature of India that many of its important temples and shrines stand in spots of singular natural beauty and sublimity. The situation of the Sun Temple at Konarak is remarkable in this respect.

It stands on a wide sea beach facing the Bay of Bengal close to the mouth of the river Chandrabhaga. The combination of land, river and sea has given it great charm.



Pagoda, Konarak.

The 'Black Pagoda,' as it had been known for ages to foreign seaman, was a great landmark from the sea.

Tradition has it that a prodigiously big magnet was set upon the temple and vessels would avoid its proximity in fear of disaster. But there is no trace of it to-day.

The temple was designed as a magnificent chariot drawn by seven horses. It is the chariot of the Sun god, ceaselessly coursing the heavens. As is customary with Indian temples, the main temple which is the abode of the deity had a hall in front for visitors. The whole structure was on wheels. The audience hall alone with the horses in front has survived. The temple itself has tumbled down in the course of ages. In the vacant spot, only a magnificent image of the Sun god now stands in the open. As the audience hall has the appearance more of a pagoda than an Indian temple and from the sea it possibly looked dark, it earned the name of Black Pagoda.

The temple stands in lonely grandeur 50 miles away from the nearest town, the city of Puri, linked by a good highway upto the edge of the small stream at the foot of the sand dunes skirting the temple precincts.

Advancing sands of the seashore for generations have not only wrought havoc to the edifice but almost engulfed a good bulk of it till rescued by Government. When the sands were removed, a vast yard, square in shape, fully paved and walled up with stone, emerged. The temple is in the middle of it. The 'Pagoda' got so much damaged, though still standing somehow, that it has been kept stuffed with sand to prevent falling down.

The temple is beautifully sculptured all over. Even the wheels and the spokes are covered with fine carvings. At one place, a swing carrying Lord Sri Krishna and Radha has been carved out. Not an inch of it has been left uncovered with the finest carving. Even the chains supporting the swing have carvings on them.

A freeze of black stone runs round the base. Strangely enough, the figures in bas-relief on this freeze are not in traditional motifs but are of lively animals in hundred different poses. Elephants predominate. But no two elephants are in the same posture. The naturalness of the animals and the trees surrounding them is quite refreshing and seems to be quite modern. The richly caparisoned spirited steeds which are of huge size have been beautifully executed. Thus, the artists were at home as much in hugeness as in details.

Experts have calculated that the coping stone of the temple weighs as much as 2,000 tons. The stone is 25 ft. thick. One is staggered to think how the huge weight has been manipulated and placed in position.

Steel girders can be seen supporting the roof. Strangely, they have not rusted by exposure to weather or by sea breeze, thus providing another evidence of the very high knowledge of metallurgy among our ancients.

The image of the Sun god in the open space behind is of beautiful, bluish green stone and is highly polished. The ornaments and the few clothes on the body have been carved with marvellous skill and fineness.

Few are aware that the fine black stone column (Aruna Stambha) near the road at the entrance of the Puri Temple was removed from Konarak Temple.

It is possible that other similar embellishments of Konarak have also disappeared. One of them is the famous 'Nava-graha' stone, a slab depicting the nine heavenly planetary bodies. This stone of marvellous workmanship was placed above the entrance to the temple. At one time it dropped down, but remained unbroken. It measured 20' x 4' and weighed 20 tons. The artistry was so singular that an official thought

of placing it in the Calcutta Museum and obtained some funds for removing it. The story goes that before the transshipment was completed the funds were exhausted. The stone may still be lying somewhere on the way.

The view from the temple of the Sun rising from the confluence of the river and the sea is, indeed, magnificent. One has to climb to the topmost terrace of the temple to get the best view. Round the edge of this terrace are big figures of female dancers and musicians. But what a pity not a nose on any face is intact ! Queer Vandalism ! But what is remarkable is that, although noseless, the smile on the lips of some is still unmistakable. What a mastery of craftsmanship !

Lower down, one finds innumerable small figures of nude men and women in close embrace similar to bigger ones that exist on the temple walls at Puri. These representations are obviously obscene to us, but it is commonsense that the builders of such a magnificent temple would not certainly spoil it with these, had they not worthier motives behind. The motive is evidently philosophical or spiritual, or, perhaps, instruction in sex matters !

The other sculptures and workings on the temple are too numerous to mention. In a part of the yard, a small museum has been built to house the various stray figures found during excavation.

About Konarak a discerning foreign visitor wrote :—

“ Konarak, magnificent even in ruins, stands to-day as one of the most remarkable of Hinduism's contributions to the world's greatest art. As we see its mighty mass, a flattened pyramid on a square base, surmounted by a great crowning stone 25 feet thick and about 2,000 tons in weight and its majestic lines, its perfect proportions, the originality and the gigantic concep-

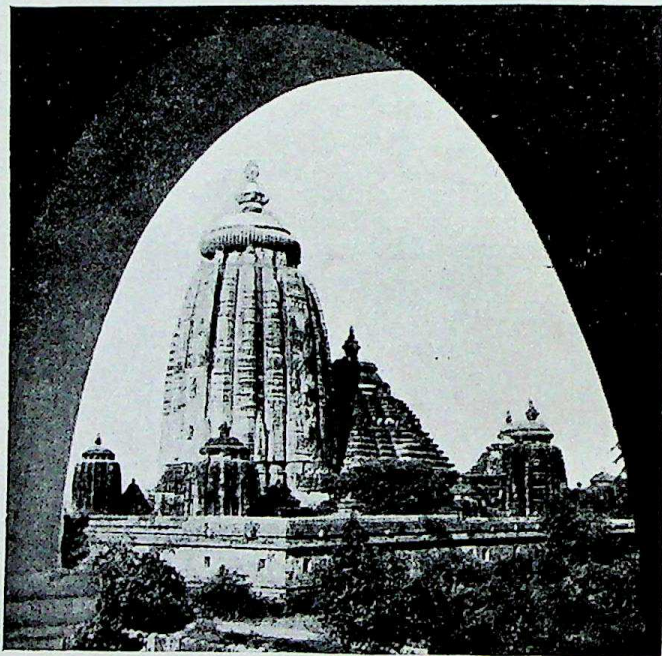
tion and magnificent execution of the idea of the mighty temple in the shape of a chariot of the Sun god, a chariot moving on many wheels each measuring about 9 feet in diameter, in its wonderful and endless carvings and the almost burnished metallic finish of the beautiful green chlorite of the sculptures, all combine to produce an unforgettable impression coupled with pride at the thought that it is a glorious contribution to the world's greatest art."

It needs hardly to be said that every word of the above is perfectly true.

King Narasinha I of the Ganga dynasty of Orissa built this great temple. A worthy king, indeed, was he and worthy too, the hosts of artists and workmen who were successful in creating something which, till to-day, is considered as one of the finest specimens of India's past.

PURI

But for the world famous temple of Lord Jagannath, Puri is hardly a place worth a visit. But the sea beach at Puri—what a wonder!—especially for the sea-starved people of the sub-continent of India who form over 90% of the population.



The Jagannath Temple, Puri.

The sea skirts all the three sides of India no doubt, but nowhere else are the breakers so big and lovely in all seasons of the year. The semi-circular beach, too, is beautiful and the nice gradient of the surface below the waters is quite enjoyable for bath.

In summer, in spite of the scorching sun overhead, sea bath and lovely sea breeze are quite refreshing. In winter, bathing in the very mild cold of Puri is exhilarating.

Puri, being very popular among the people of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa, is full of decent visitors of both sexes in summer, autumn and winter. Thus, morning or evening walk on the beach among gay faces is an unforgettable experience. After the holiday is over and duty calls the visitor back to his home, he is loth to leave Puri. Even more than the parents, the children feel the wrench when compelled to depart.

The lovely sea view with its wonderful sunrise and sunset has made Puri easily one of the most popular and enjoyable watering places of India.

HOTELS AND LODGINGS :

The whole sea face is studded with lovely hotels—mostly in Indian style—suiting all tastes and pockets.

Among those in European style, the S. E. Railway Hotel is the foremost. This hotel is reputed to be run very efficiently. The charge is about Rs. 20.00 per day (single).

MALABAR BACKWATERS

India is well known for her great variety of physical features. The backwaters of Malabar are a region not only unique in character but of wonderful natural beauty. Motor launch service from Cochin proceeds south along the sea coast and after a few hours' journey reaches Aleppy—a great industrial centre of coconut oil products.

The backwaters can be said to start from there. The launch then enters into sea lanes which run in various directions for scores of miles.

The coast line of India at this place is shown on the map as heavily indented and broken up. Actually, the sea enters inland at various points, flows through the big stretches of the country forming various channels, creeks and lagoons and emerges again in the open sea.

Veritable forests of almost never ending lines of lovely coconut palms crowd round the water and on both banks, but, surprisingly, there is no undergrowth. There is habitation throughout.

Not only do the people live in the shade of the palms, but they also build their huts with them and thatch them with their leaves. There is hardly any other cultivation, the whole economy of their existence depending solely on the coconut. The motor launch in its course passes stately looking country boats fully laden with nuts. The boats are immensely large, attractively designed and are of beautiful workmanship. They remind one of India's ancient maritime ventures—huge sea-going vessels designed as swans or peacocks.

A high church steeple peeps out from the pervading green and indicates a village. The whole route is dotted with them—pretty big and substantial ones—and the inevitable coffee shops.

The people are mostly Christians but have not adopted either Western dress or manner of living. Draped mostly in dhoti, they enjoy their morning breakfast of *idli* and coffee like any other southerner. They speak Malayalam and mostly do not understand a word of English. The complexion of their skin is lighter than that of the people of Tamilnad or Andhra, and with cropped heads their resemblance with the northerner is surprisingly close. The ladies put on white saris with thin borders, not the dark red green or blue colours of other southerners. Elderly working women keep the upper portion of the body completely bare. Young ladies of the upper class are of bright olive complexion, have finely chiselled features and are draped in white dhoti down the waist, the upper part of the body having only a short bodice of the thinnest linen kept open in the middle.

Gradually the channel widens and the launch is stopped at a lock gate. The gate does not open until some big leisurely country boat is passed. There are lock gates almost every three or four miles.

At places, the water broadens still and forms almost a lake. Water, generally, not being deep and temperature moderate, it is a heaven for boys and girls for taking bath or swimming for hours.

On many of these places, there are pretty high undulating banks covered completely with lawns with a neat hut or two of the comparatively well-to-do on the tops. In the fascinating surroundings, these look charming indeed and resemble beautiful Japanese paintings.

Leaving human habitation, the water enters again into shady forests of nothing but wild coconuts of all sizes on both sides. It is hard to believe that dense growth of these palms is at all possible. So close are they that even the big-horned cattle—especially the

buffalo—can hardly pass through on account of their horns.

But for tiny huts few and far between, these grand arbors of nature seem never ending in spite of the speed of the launch. The strange quiet of the pervading solitude sinks deep into the soul. One is apt to forget for the moment that this too is a part of India and not Equatorial Africa. One forgets too that there are crowded streets in the world or that there is civilisation only within a few hours' journey. After some time, the scene changes almost dramatically and a spot of dry open highlands with wide roads between nicely built buildings is reached. This is Quilon town.

COCHIN

The famous harbour daily growing in importance, especially on account of the Government decision to locate the second ship building centre here, Cochin is also a beauty spot in beautiful Kerala.

As the visitor alights from the train at the neat little town of Ernakulam, with the streets lined with fully laden young coconut trees, and proceeds to the harbour, less than a mile from the railway station, he cannot but be struck by the charming panorama which suddenly opens out before him. Cochin Harbour is an almost perfectly circular vast seawater lake, about a couple of miles in diameter, with the white buildings of the city of Cochin glistening in the sun on the distant horizon on the opposite side. Stately ocean liners and smart vessels of the Navy add colour to the scene. Small steam and motor launches frisking about on the rippling blue waters here and there complete the picture of perfect landscape.

Good Indian hotels are available at Ernakulam but those of Western style are all in Cochin. On the other side of the town is the open sea. This makes Cochin almost an island. On one side is the narrow channel which connects the harbour with the sea.

If this outlet alone is guarded, all the ships in the harbour are perfectly safe from attack. Thus, Cochin is one of the most perfect natural harbours in the world.

Formerly, Cochin was divided into two sharply distinct halves—the British Cochin and the State Cochin. While British Cochin is almost completely occupied by firms and warehouses of famous British traders and the roads are broad and well laid out, the picture of the State area is quite different. Homely residential houses, mostly of the middle class, on narrow roads make up the major portion. The outlook is clearly suburban.

The sea washes the shores of both areas. On the State side, considerable fishing activity by fishing nets fastened to long, stout poles is noticeable.

The historically important part of Cochin is the Jewish quarter with the ancient synagogue and the marble statue of the famous explorer, Vasco-de-Gama. This is a distinct area with very old buildings lining the narrow streets. An air of antiquity still hangs about the place.

CAPE COMORIN

Every school boy in India is familiar with the name of Cape Comorin not because it is the only cape in India but also for its unique situation as the needle-pointed "Land's end" of this vast sub-continent. Its Indian name 'Kanya Kumari' is the name of the goddess whose beautiful image is in the famous temple built by Hindus at this unique spot. Ancient Hindus could not seem to rest till they could associate great natural beauty with a perpetual pæan to the divine.

There is a 80 mile bus route to the Cape from the fine city of Trivandrum, capital of Kerala. From Tirunelveli railway station it is nearer—almost halfway. The Trivandrum-Cape route is remarkable in many ways. The road is cemented throughout. It is certainly a strange thing for India that in all these 80 miles there is hardly a village or the inevitable rice field. This is a high and dry land. One neat township follows another in quick succession. It makes one's heart good to see nice play-grounds full of romping children in front of neat school buildings almost in a never-ending chain interspersed by beautiful churches or neat dwellings. The high standard of life is evident from public telephone call booths at regular intervals, as if Prime Minister Nehru's dream of India has suddenly come true. The paper reports of high percentage of literacy in Kerala is unmistakably before one's eyes. There is no congestion, the high road is beautifully broad and straight.

Near the border of Kerala is the town of Nagarkoil. After a halt here, the bus goes straight to the Cape. At the last lap of the journey, the sea is visible from the road for a good stretch on the right. After some time, the sea is on the left too. Gradually, both the seas come closer and closer and finally, as the Cape is reached, the sea is in front too. The narrow tip of India is hedged in by the sea on three sides exactly as seen in the map—on the right the Arabian Sea, on the

left the Bay of Bengal and in front the Indian Ocean—big giants all! A strange exultation is felt by the visitor. In the case of Swami Vivekananda, when he stepped in here, staff in hand, during his wandering days, he fell into a trance of satisfaction and fulfilment. Squatting down on a piece of rock and raising its head from the sea just below the tip, he went into *Samadhi* and declared later that he had such a vision of India here as he had never before. The rock is still known as Vivekananda Rock. The disciples and admirers of the Swami have put up a small library nearby and named it Vivekananda Library in commemoration of his visit. So, this is a hallowed land and thrice hallowed for ages for the unmarried goddess Kanya Kumari, still worshipped in her great temple.

No sooner does the visitor enter the portals of the temple than the delicacy and richness of workmanship on the stone columns, walls and ceilings arrest his attention. The huge dimensions of the hall and corridors leading up to the image are awe-inspiring. The temple has been built up right from the waters. Says one observant foreign visitor:—

“The extremely elaborate ornamental and florid motifs which are the distinguishing features of the Hoyshala style are witnessed in the exquisite carvings in the temple. The stone pillars and statues, the richly decorated heavy columns with protruding brackets and the elaborately carved ceilings compel close examination.

The granite pillars in the shrine produce different melodious sounds of varying tones when struck. With remarkable economy of line, human emotions are expressed in these exquisite carvings. The artists who created these marvels had an eye for feature and knew the technique to express them powerfully.”

In these days, such a high encomium would have smacked of propaganda but the spontaneity of the

eulogy is obvious. Apart from the architecture, carvings or the figures, to think of the graduated musical sounds of the pillars ! Does it not seem to be something superhuman for such gigantic columns ?

But the writer has not spoken of the main centre of attraction of the temple—the far-famed exquisite image of the goddess in finest white marble. What a pleasant smiling countenance of the youthful virgin maiden, what innocence and how beautiful looks the dazzling white stone in the centre of the forehead ! Strangely, it does not look at all to be an old statue though it is obviously very old.

There are certain places which are famous for sunrise and others which are known for the beauty of sunset. But here, from the verandah of the delightful dak bungalow, one may have one's heart's fill daily both of the exquisite sunrise and also of the wonderful sunset.

The marvellous image inside the marvel of a temple, built in exquisitely marvellous setting of the conjunction of the three seas, makes Cape Comorin one of the earth's beauty spots indeed.

HOTELS AND LODGINGS :

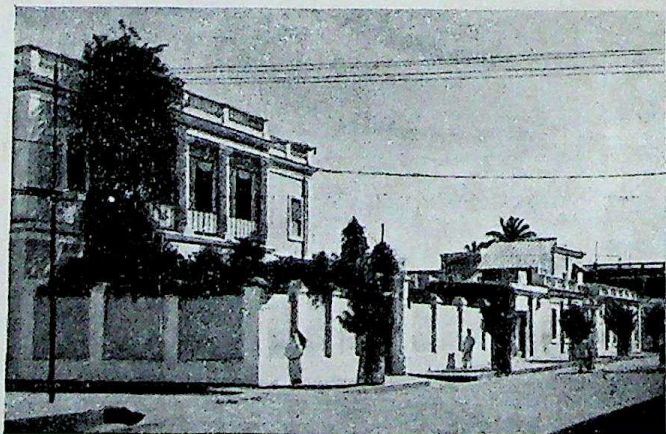
Besides the Dak Bungalow and the Choultri (*i.e.*, Dharamshala), there is a lovely State Hotel ideally situated on the sea front. The charge is moderate.

PONDICHERRY

Of the sea-coast towns of India, the erstwhile French Capital town of Pondicherry is not only famous as the old capital city of all the French possessions in India but is also a picturesque spot.

Pondicherry is reached from the Villupuram junction of the South Indian Railway in the far South. The short run from Villupuram terminates at Pondicherry.

The town is divided by a canal into Indian and French localities. The latter is along the sea-coast. Straight, wide, tarred roads parallel to the sea, crossed at right angles by equally broad nice roads, make up the European town. Excepting for stray motors and an occasional cycle rickshaw, there is hardly any traffic. Population, too, is meagre in this area. During the French days, the roads were evidently busier with vehicular traffic. The houses are almost all double-storied, villa type, of very pretty designs, having almost invariably a small garden at the entrance.



Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry.

From the time Sri Aurobindo moved into the place after the famous Alipore Bomb case trial in the first decade of the century, Pondicherry has grown gradually to be a great spiritual centre attracting the notice of cultured people throughout the world. The great patriot, savant and man of the spirit did not leave the place for even a day for about half a century and was also finally laid to rest there a few years ago.

An aura of great spirituality thus fills the town which is re-inforced by the presence still of his great spiritual helpmate and co-worker, Mrs. Mira Richard, now "The Mother."

From an humble dwelling of Sri Aurobindo and a handful of original associates with hardly sufficient wherewithals for daily needs, the Ashram has grown up amazingly and is to-day humming with selfless activities of some 1,200 permanent dweller devotees of both sexes from many lands and many with their wives and children.

But this is a strange Ashram—not one enclosure like Tagore's Santiniketan or Gandhi's Wardha. Slowly spreading from one house to another in the town, the Ashram now occupies no less than 200 houses, big and small, residential or organisational. The houses are mostly contiguous, and painted all alike in beautiful light blue. Among them towers the high structure of the most modern design—Golconda—housing no less than 400 single disciples.

Besides a full-fledged high school for the children of disciples, Sri Aurobindo University is growing up fast.

The Ashram is independent for almost all its requirements from food to building materials, from books to foot-wear. So diverse are its activities, so interesting and disciplined its daily programme and so international its appeal and membership that a visit to Pondicherry, and especially to the Ashram, is a very interesting adventure.

The house where the last remains of the Saint are cremated is visited by hundreds throughout the day, who touch the tomb with the forehead in a spirit of deep homage and devotion. The tomb rests beneath the shade of beautifully overhanging trees decked daily with fresh flowers. The whole atmosphere is touching and sublime.

Thus, Pondicherry town is a great contribution to India of France, the home of the finest refinement and culture and Sri Aurobindo Ashram, a beautiful blending of this best Western civilisation with the most spiritually alive culture of Asia—the great heritage of India.

The Ashram is always open to visitors and scores of people visit it daily. A prior intimation to the Mother for permission to stay is desirable and always brings prompt reply. Arrangement for boarding and lodging within the Ashram is excellent on a moderate charge of Rs. 4.50 per day for a single room or Rs. 3.50 for a bed in a hall.

MAHABALIPURAM

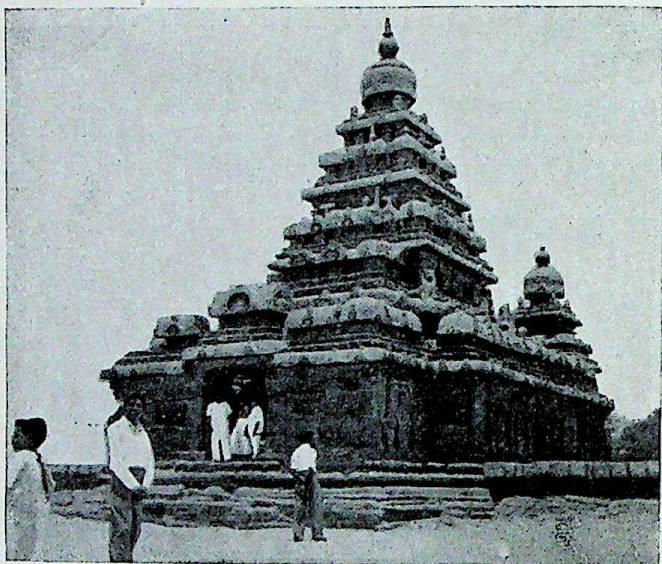
South India is noted for its majestic temples built by man, but the modest Shore Temple at Mahabalipuram on the sea-coast, just 40 miles from Madras, is delightful more for its fine setting than for the temple itself. The temple stands on a wide, white beach, the waves actually washing its base.

There is regular bus service from Madras over a very fine straight road, *via* Chinglepet, terminating at the foot of the hills. The sea and the temple can be seen at a distance to the left.

The hillside, a mass of solid hard rock, has been profusely worked upon with huge figures—an elephant standing out prominent of them all—and a host of others from mythology. Arjuna's penance (*tapasya*) has been depicted on a broad 'Canvas'. He is standing on one foot reduced almost to skin and bone with matted locks and beard. Hundreds of sages and people surround this august figure with devout look in their eyes and the forest where the penance was performed is quite frightful with beasts of prey. A few other mythological stories have also been depicted.

A few small temples of Siva and Ganesha stand in the vicinity, but the special point about them is that each has been carved out of a single black rock. Though small in size, they are quite graceful. A few caves have also been scooped out of the rock.

Thus, far from the madding crowds, though not quite inaccessible, Mahabalipuram was evidently ideal for quiet meditation for ages.



Shore Temple, Mahabalipuram.

The Shore Temple is about a furlong away from the hills. Though much smaller than any well-known temple of South India, shaped almost like a Burmese pagoda, its design is very lovely. A row of squatting cows on the parapet surrounding the temple is attractively realistic.

According to art connoisseurs, Mahabalipuram is a magnificent example of the perfection in architecture and designing that was reached at the time of the Imperial Pallavas. But even more than this, the fine taste that was displayed, first in selecting the site and secondly in the idea of building the finely shaped temple on the sands sufficiently away from the rocks and caves, is praiseworthy.

HOTELS AND LODGINGS :

It is a pity that, except for a few coffee shops, there is hardly a place for night's rest at Mahabalipuram.

UP State Museum, Lucknow

GOPALPUR-ON-SEA

David Copperfield's childhood days can to my mind be beautifully filmed in the natural setting of Gopalpur-On-Sea. This modest sea-side resort of Orissa has such a great resemblance to the scenes so graphically depicted by Charles Dickens ! In fact, of all the sea side places of India, Gopalpur has the most natural sea face.

The route to Gopalpur is from the railway station of Berhampore in Ganjam district. The ten-mile road to the sea-side is beautiful. Taxis are available. There is a bus route too.

The town is virtually the creation of a few Europeans and Anglo-Indians. It seems that finding Puri almost always crowded with pilgrims, this quiet, healthy spot in the vicinity was chosen by them for settling down. In fact, the greater portion of the houses even now belongs to retired European and Anglo-Indian Railway employees. It must be said to their credit that the choice was excellent. At one time, this place was even considered as a possible site for the capital of the State of Orissa.

Berhampore is, perhaps, the neatest town in Orissa and almost all necessities of modern life are available there. Gopalpur has, of course, a few shops but the stock is meagre.

Unlike Puri or Visakhapatnam, the first row of houses here does not face the sea but have their backs to it, probably, because of the strong breeze and the sand. The other roads of the town are mostly parallel to the first road.

The place is quite small. The shore and the neat post office are the only centres of activity.

Gopalpur has a healthy climate. Less congested than most other sea resorts, with an unspoilt sea front,

made beautiful by a lovely creek, it is a charming little place.

HOTELS AND LODGINGS :

Many European families take in paying guests here. This, generally, serves the purpose of hotels. Of the public establishments, the only ones are the small Dak Bungalow and Palm Beach Hotel. The latter is run on the same lines as the S. E. Railway Hotels at Puri & Ranchi and is equally costly.

DIGHA

Digha is, perhaps, the newest name in India attracting visitors to the sea. It is surprising that one of the loveliest beaches in the world should have remained obscure so long.

This sea-side resort is seventy-five miles by road from the famous railway junction of Kharagpur on the South Eastern Railway. Kharagpur itself is but 72 miles from Calcutta. The road journey can be cut down to 55 miles only, if one travels by rail upto Contai Road Station. Good buses are available at both Kharagpur and Contai Road connecting all important trains from Howrah. The road is now tarred throughout. Only a couple of years ago, some portions of the road were almost impassable during rains. The absence of a road bridge at Kolaghat makes motor journey from Calcutta somewhat difficult, but one is now under construction.

Digha is in Midnapore district of West Bengal only 20 miles from the sub-divisional town of Contai. Although Calcutta is one of the largest ports of India, jaded city workers there had no means of spending their week-end and refreshing themselves at any attractive sea resort within easy reach. The only outlet was Diamond Harbour and that too is not actually on the sea.

It is through the efforts of West Bengal's Chief Minister, Dr. B. C. Roy, that Digha is developing fast into a convenient health resort.

What is specially attractive about Digha is its wonderful beach. The surface is surprisingly firm, motor cars passing on it hardly making any impression. So, it is a paradise for motor-cyclists. The width of the beach is no less than 100 yards. Quite a good football field can be made anywhere from the bank

to the water and the slope is so gradual that it is practically plain smooth ground. This lovely beach retains its width almost uniformly for miles in both directions. Light planes too can conveniently land here. This seems to be an ideal track to hold speed tests for motor cycles and motor cars.

In order to develop the place, Government have acquired all the lands of Digha and have arranged to sell suitable plots through a Co-operative Society. Thus, the place is going soon to grow into a lovely spot in no distant future. When, moreover, the bridge over the river Rupnarayan is completed, it will be very easy of access from Calcutta by car.

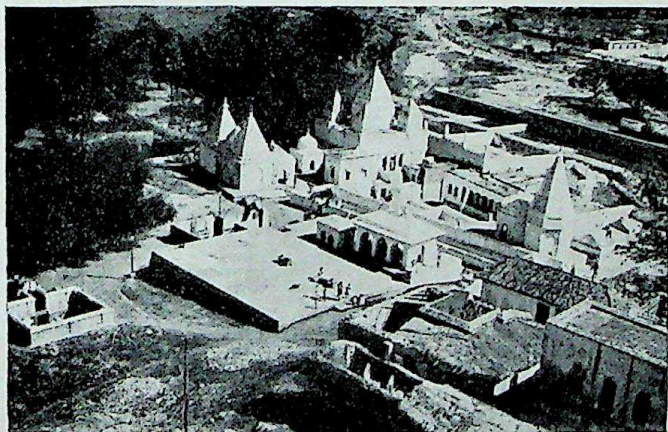
The beautiful beach becomes lovelier still in the evening twilight. The shade of darkness approaching from the land, meeting the golden glow of the setting sun from beyond the sea, reflected on the waters turning the western half of the sea into a mass of boiling white while the rest remaining blue with shining sparkles here and there, is fascinating indeed. In this wonderful semi-darkness, the visitors, scattered over the wide beach, especially the ladies in their coloured saris, seem more ethereal than real.

HOTELS AND LODGINGS :

Not only have the West Bengal Government improved the road to Digha but have also electrified the township by establishing a small power station and tarred the main road. The other important amenity added to the place is the construction of a fine rest house called Cafeteria. The rooms have attached bath rooms and the catering is good. The charge for boarding and lodging is about Rs. 6/- per day. With its Annexe, the Cafeteria can accommodate about 60 persons. There are two private hotels too providing boarding and lodging at an even cheaper rate. The bigger of these is the Sarada Boarding.

RAJGIR

In the whole of India, there is hardly another historical site as old as Rajgir in Bihar. Ancient Rajagriha was known even before the Mahabharata. It is mentioned in the Ramayana. In the Mahabharata, we find it as the capital city of King Jarasandha of Magadha who was killed by the second Pandava, Bheem. Later, it rose to great prominence as the favourite resort of Lord Buddha. There are a number of interesting remains connected with Buddha's life. Moreover, the massive ruins of the famous Buddhist university of Nalanda are only eight miles away.



Rajgir Kund.

The centre of attraction of Rajgir now, however, is its famous and profuse hot springs and a bracing climate in winter. Rajgir is also a beauty spot. Apart from the other merits of the place, its beauty was presumably an important factor for its popularity from the earliest times.

Rajgir is connected by a light train branching off from Bukhtiarpur station on the Eastern Railway. It is the terminus of the 22 miles railroad. Nalanda is an earlier station on this railway. There are two motor roads to Rajgir—one from Bukhtiarpur *via* Bihar Shariff, 26 miles from Rajgir, and the other from Gaya, about 40 miles away. The latter road enters Rajgir from the opposite side.

Not only Hindus and Buddhists but the Jains too hold Rajgir sacred. Several Jain Tirthankars performed great austerities on the hills here and five lovely white temples adorn the tops of five hills in their memory. Even aged Jain pilgrims of both sexes take great pains to visit each and everyone of these. Near the town area, there are two very big Jain temples belonging to the two different sects of the faith—Digambar Jain Temple and Svetambar Jain Temple. The temples are very richly endowed and the attached guest houses are palatial.

Mahavir, the founder of the faith, spent his last days at Pawa Puri, 16 miles away. The Jains have interred his remains inside a beautiful mausoleum of marble in the centre of a large square tank full of lotuses. The tomb is reached from the bank by a nice causeway. The place is furnished with electricity. At night when the lights are on both in the mausoleum and in the big hostels built for the pilgrims, the beauty of the place is captivating.

On the occasion of the Buddha Jayanti celebrations, Rajgir was visited by the Dalai and the Panchen Lamas of Tibet. The hot springs were beautifully renovated at the time.

Venubana, the woods where Buddha spent successive rainy seasons, has now been converted into a lovely park with a tank in the centre.

The flight of steps leading to the top of Gridhra Kuta mountain, where Buddha used to reside and deliver his sermons, has been entirely renewed very

nicely. The serene atmosphere of the top of this finely wooded hill and the fascinating view it commands of the surrounding landscape for miles are, indeed, extremely attractive.

The oldest records show that the city of Rajagriha was completely guarded by circular hills. Little of the remains of the city are, however, traceable now. The whole area is a vast forest now infested with wild animals. The Gaya road cuts across the middle of this forest and, thus, provides views of excellent natural scenery.

Outside this circle of hills is the modern town of Rajgir with its tiny railway station. It is a very small town, but its recent development, with a beautifully wide tarred road leading to the springs and a number of beautiful public buildings on both sides interspersed by undulating open spaces, has made it quite pretty. First comes the Burma Temple, quite a picturesque building with a garden. Next is the Government Dormitory—quite a big modern building meant mainly for foreign visitors. Since, however, such visitors are few and far between, the rooms are allotted by the local S.D.O., P.W.D., to other visitors also on payment of a nominal daily charge. Then comes the Japanese Temple, an unpretentious double-storied building with a garden in front in quiet surrounding. The Dak Bungalow, Circuit House, Ministerial Officers' Bungalow and P.W.D. Dak Bungalow are quite massive modern mansions in lovely environments.

HOTELS AND LODGINGS :

In the absence of any good hotel in European style, the visitor has to put up in (1) the Dormitory, (2) Dak Bungalow, (3) Circuit House or (4) Ministerial Officers' Dak Bungalow. The charges are nominal, but permission for stay has to be obtained from the local S.D.O., P.W.D., up to 3 days and from Executive Engineer, P.W.D., Bihar Sharif (16 miles away), for more. There is no catering arrangement but kitchens and utensils are provided.

DEOGHAR AND JASIDIH

The two districts of Bihar—Chotanagpur and Santhal Parganas—have many fine little places of tourist interest. They have three-fold merit. In the first place, they are quite healthy places and, as such, are popular health resorts. Secondly, the region being hilly, gently undulating and without any unsightly undergrowths anywhere, everything is spick and span and the area presents a nice view. Thirdly, the people—mostly Adibasis—are unsophisticated, good-tempered and blessed with fine health.

As Ranchi is the Headquarters of Chotanagpur, the Headquarter town of Santhal Parganas is Deoghar (also known as *Baidyanath Dham*). This place has an additional attraction. It is a famous Hindu religious centre. The huge temple of Lord Siva (*Baidyanathji*) draws pilgrims from all parts of India. The Railway Station is named *Baidyanath Dham*.

For those coming for the first time to these parts of Bihar, their beautiful natural scenery—fine localities with plenty of open spaces—seems very refreshing. The crisp dry air too feels vitalising.

The centre of Deoghar is the Clock Tower crossing where four big roads meet from four different far-flung localities. The layout of Deoghar is like a wheel—the hub being the Clock Tower Crossing, which is also the shopping centre of the place. Straight Roads branch off in different directions like spokes of a wheel. Very few other towns in India have this type of fine symmetry of form.

On each of these roads, at a distance of a mile or two from the Clock Tower, there is a distinct charming locality of fine bungalows within compounds. These are the Castor Town, the Williams Town, the Bompas Town and, the latest, the Bilasi Town. Flowers abound everywhere.

In between these 'towns' are cultivated fields—mostly rice fields wherever there is a depression—or rocky stretches covered sparsely by trees. Thus, the whole of Deoghar is an alternation of beautiful, decent localities and stretches of green fields or rocky tracts with a small stream or two here and there—ideal environment for holiday makers and health seekers.

The temple has an extensive tank attached to it and there is the inevitable congestion of pilgrim activities.

The bazar is quite extensive. This part of Deoghar, which was evidently the original town, is quite different from the refreshing pleasantness of the different 'towns' referred to above, which are of later growth. This combination of a fine market place where practically every necessity of life is easily available and the detached healthy localities is, doubtless, very convenient.

An important sight of the place, next to the huge temple itself, is Tapovan, a few miles away, a secluded mountain cave. This is reputed to be the spot where the famous holy man of Deoghar, Balananda Brahmachari Maharaj, now deceased, practised *tapasya* and obtained enlightenment. From the nature of the place, it seems likely that for generations many other holy men practised austerities here. The scenery on the way, across a small stream, and at the spot is quite charming.

The road passes through a suburb named Kunda, from the temple of Goddess Kundeswari there. The temple, especially the image, is very beautiful.

The extensive Ashram of Balananda Brahmachari with big buildings, guest houses, a big tank, etc., is just outside the town in the locality called Karanibad. Recently a lady devotee has erected a grand memorial temple for Brahmachariji. Of light red stone and plenty of fine marble, the design of the temple is picturesque. The decorations and carvings on stone, though simpler than in similar old temples, are extremely

tasteful and artistic. The temple is popularly known as 'Nawlakhia Temple', because it is said to have cost nine lacs of rupees to build.

The Ramkrishna Mission has a residential school at Deoghar in beautiful open surroundings. Teaching being done by the Swamis themselves and not by mercenary teachers, the school has a great reputation not only for its teaching but also for character building and health of the students.

Deoghar is reached from Jasidih Junction on the Main Line of the Eastern Railway. The distance from Jasidih is only four miles. This short distance, being connected by a fine tarred road, is easily covered also by Tonga and Cycle Rickshaw. There is a bus service too. The Railway line terminates at Deoghar.

HOTELS AND LODGINGS :

There is no hotel on European lines but Indian style hotels are plenty. There are also some Government Inspection Bungalows.

JASIDIH :—Jasidih was a mere Railway Junction with no township just a few years ago. The well known florist of Calcutta, S. P. Chatterjee, had a big rose garden there and used to supply roses daily to Calcutta. Then some rich men built a few garden houses there. Seth Onkarmal Jetiah, the millionaire of Calcutta, built almost a palace surrounded by an exquisite garden. These houses were constructed along the only road of the place which links it with Deoghar. They had to depend practically for all their supplies on Deoghar. But, of late, there has been a spate of building activity there. A few other roads, too, have emerged and shops of all kinds have sprung up.

Every new house built is an attempt to create beauty with the result that Jasidih has become a beautiful place now. Being less congested than Deoghar, it is better in health and, being on the Main Railway line, it is easier of access. The undulating open grounds outside the town all round are lovely.

MADHUPUR

Of the health resorts in Santhal Parganas, Madhupur is the second biggest after Deoghar. In fact, as a health resort, this was the first to grow up. Deoghar was mainly a pilgrim centre. Madhupur was developed by the rich from Calcutta attracted by its beautiful scenery, healthy climate and proximity to Bengal. It is 185 miles from Howrah and is on the Main Railway line.

The Railway Station is in the heart of the town. Just outside it are the Chowk and the bazar area and on the opposite side is the beautiful Dak Bungalow in the centre of a spacious lawn.

The Anglo-Indian locality is within stone's throw. The bungalows are small but neat and belong mostly to retired railway officials.

The residential Indian localities are mostly away from the bazar area. They are in beautiful open localities—Pathar-Chapti, Lalgarrh, Pania Khola, Bahanna Bigha, Kalipur Town, Kusma, Sekhpura, Mina bazar, etc. While Pathar-Chapti is the oldest of these localities, Bahanna Bigha is the nearest and the biggest.

In these areas, each house is a bungalow with a spacious compound of lovely flower and fruit gardens. Every bungalow has a name—often poetic—and the design of the houses is also quite charming. These beautiful bungalows on straight wide roads are quite pleasant for the visitor. The houses, however, remain vacant for the better part of the year and suddenly hum with life during the Durga Puja holidays, after the rains, and continue to be so till Xmas. Remaining partly occupied during the winter months, they become dead again with the advent of summer, when there are only lovely *malis* to look after the houses in the absence of the owners.

A small stream partly surrounds the town and gives variety to the already beautiful scenery. The water of Madhupur is very good for most stomachs and most people regain lost health surprisingly fast.

The shops in the Chowk are of good standard. Besides the daily market, a *hat* too is held twice a week. Thus, practically, all necessities of life are easily available here. In fact, people from neighbouring smaller towns resort to Madhupur for better class supplies.

Recently, electricity has come to the town removing a long felt want.

Madhupur is a big railway centre and so has quite an extensive railway colony.

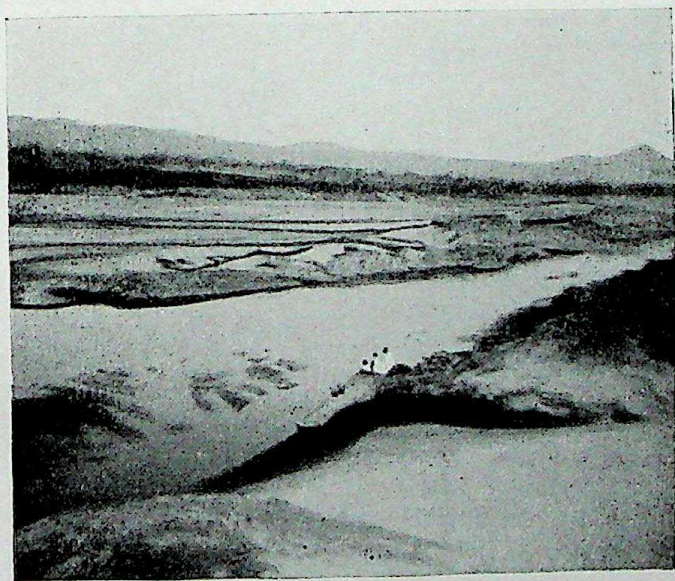
HOTELS AND LODGINGS :

The Dak Bungalow is very big and is the best place for a short stay. There are a few Indian hotels too.

GHATSILA

Ghatsila is one of the picturesque health resorts of Bihar. It is between Kharagpur Junction and Tatanagar Station on the S. E. Railway. Being very close to Bengal border, it is very easily accessible to people from that State with whom the place is very popular.

Discovery of copper a few miles away and the establishment of a copper factory by the British, *viz.*, Indian Copper Corporation, close to the town, have added greatly to its importance and helped its development.



Subarnarekha River, Ghatsila.

But the main attraction of Ghatsila is the beautiful river Subarnarekha on the bank of which it stands. The long rows of rocks of a peculiar bluish tinge in the

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 bed of the river are very picturesque. The view of the river is so attractive that many cinema parties resort to it frequently for shooting beautiful scenery. The steep banks are of the finest sand. The children keep on sliding on the steep sand banks for hours and elders too feel tempted to join them.

The shopping centre of the town is just outside the railway station and the river which runs parallel to the railway line is only a few minutes walk from there over fine open undulating lawns. The main road too is parallel to the railway line extending, on the right, for about a couple of miles to the Copper Corporation and, on the left, for about a mile to the palace of the Ex-Raja of Ghatsila.

The busy part of the town is not much but the outlying localities with lofty sal trees, myrabolam and amla groves on clean rocky grounds are lovely indeed. Beautiful bungalows and houses are scattered here and there—not always along regular roads, only foot tracks linking one house with another. This unconventional atmosphere is refreshing to the city dweller and adds charm to the place. Gopalpur, Dahigarah, Harin Dugri are some of the localities.

There is not much vehicular traffic. The quite, open countryside atmosphere, combined with excellent health and fine scenery, is evidently very enjoyable.

So close to Bengal, yet there is so much difference in the quality of drinking water! Many confirmed dyspeptics from Bengal have settled there permanently enjoying long and healthy life. Well water is used for drinking and some of the wells are, indeed, remarkable.

The Indian Copper Corporation colony is fully electrified from their own electric supply. Nice, neat tarred roads and fine quarters make up the colony. The

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copper ore is coming by a ropeway from Mosabani
mines across the river. Although, in the present day
context of India, this factory will be regarded as small,
yet for those who have not seen either Jamshedpur or
Burnpur the operations of this factory too will seem
to be gigantic.

Most other health resorts of Bihar are alive and busy
only for a brief portion of the year, but Ghatsila is not
so. On account of the factory, it is populated through-
out the year.

HOTELS AND LODGINGS :

It is a pity that there is no hotel worth the name
there. The Dak Bungalow is in fine open surroundings
close to the river. There is a fine Marwari Dharmasala
near the Railway Station.

JHARGRAM

Jhargram is a small pretty place in Bengal, almost on the borders of Bihar, on the South Eastern Railway, a few stations before the well-known junction station of Kharagpur.

To people outside Bengal it is hardly known, but for its unique loveliness it seems to deserve more publicity than has so far fallen to its lot.

Jhargram is a place thick with lovely, straight sal trees. Sincere thanks are due to the city fathers here for having the unique vision of creating a lovely town without destroying, even injuring, the sal trees as far as practicable. Thus, a few minutes before the train reaches the station, lovely, unpretentious bungalows nestling within shady sal forests coming one after another create a fine impression.

As the cycle rickshaw takes the visitor from the station over nicely tarred road speckled with scattered sunrays, coming through the canopy of wide sal leaves, with lovely bungalows on each side, he cannot but thank himself for deciding to visit this pretty place. There are plenty of flowers in each compound. One may easily imagine what a heaven it becomes on moonlit nights, the lovely moonlight carpeting the whole roadway in delightful patterns.

The soil here is semi-rocky but quite good for vegetation. People travelling by the S. E. Railway may have noticed one special feature of Jhargram Station, *viz.*, that more than eatables, flowers are hawked here—mainly champak in its season or about a foot long Keora (*Kea*) flower with its characteristic strong perfume.

Once upon a time, there was a Raja of Jhargram. He has his 'palace' still and the more gorgeous modern house of his minister. There is a lovely play-ground

CC-O. In Public Domain. Digitized by Sarayu Trust and eGangotri
with a pavilion in the vicinity of the minister's house
and also there is a beautiful guest house.

The market is quite ample with several Indian hotels.

The place is developing fast mainly on account of East Pakistan refugees. Many educated refugees have been settled here by West Bengal Government on wide open localities near the station on either side of the railway line. It is good to see that the colony has been planned very well with its schools, play-grounds, parks, etc.

The climate, though slightly humid, is quite good and pleasant. The water aids digestion and is good for constipated stomachs.

The place is, naturally, quite suitable for residential schools for people of modest means. The extensive school of Swami Satyananda, 'Sevayatan', on vocational lines, is very commendably run.

Swami Sarvananda, formerly of the Ramkrishna Mission, has a fine girls' school too. A degree college has also been opened recently.

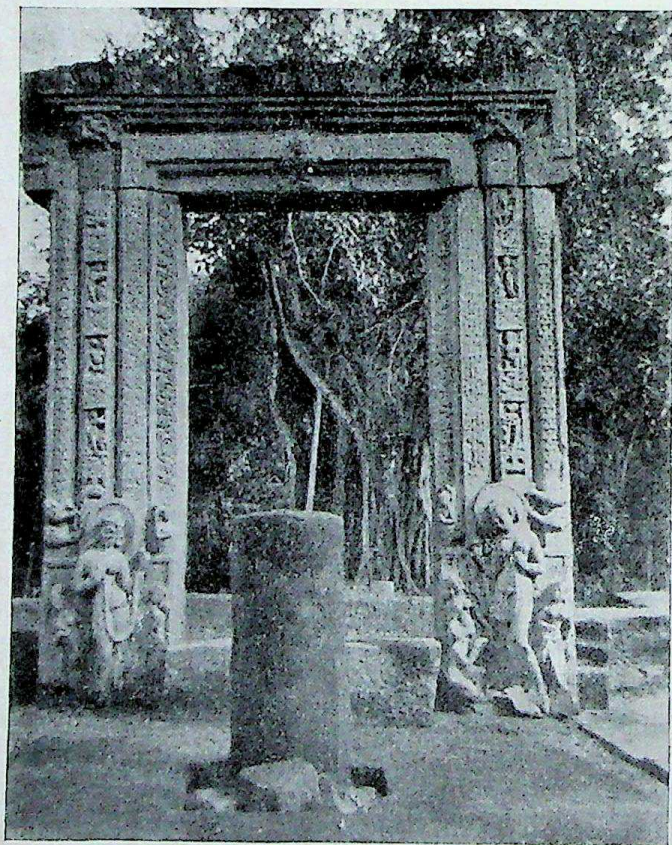
Except the hill stations of Darjeeling, Kurseong or Kalimpong, Bengal can boast of very few health resorts. Jhargram removes that want to a great extent.

HOTELS AND LODGINGS :

Except for a few moderate and cheap Indian hotels, there are no hotels worth the name.

TEZPUR

It is known throughout Assam, if not beyond her borders, that the town of Tezpur is the most picturesquely situated, charming, little town of the State. Beautiful Shillong is, of course, there, but it is a hill station which is a class apart.



Ancient Gateway, Tezpur.

UP State Museum, Lucknow

Tezpur is on the left bank of the mighty river Brahmaputra which takes a gracefully sweeping turn at its foot. The river washes two sides of the town which stands very high up on a rocky base. Huge boulders protect the river banks on both sides. Trees and jungles, filling the gaps in between, make a lovely sight from the river. The Bathing Ghat is on one side while the Steamer Ghat is on the other. An image of Ganesha has been beautifully carved out on a huge boulder at the Bathing Ghat. It is quite imposing and receives homage even to-day from the bathers, especially the ladies, everyone of whom adds a little of vermillion on its already too much vermillioned forehead. Higher up on top of the hill various interesting figures and images are found carved on stones—episodes of the mythical *Usha haran* (or abduction of Usha) as popularly believed. Some of these stones had got loose or broken in course of time and have been collected and utilised to decorate the Usha Park not far away, which is the only modern park of the town.

Now-a-days, Tezpur is connected by metre gauge railway line from Amingaon, but formerly the Steamer Ghat was the main approach to the town. From Tezpur, there was a small train to Balipara.

The road from the Steamer Ghat has to be climbed up to a good height to reach the town which is on a plateau-like plain with ascending hills beyond. Thus, the town may be said to be on a terrace. In point of location, Tezpur is almost ideal.

The road from the Ghat passes between two beautiful small lakes full of lotus on either side—quite a lovely approach to any town. The charming riverside apart, the town itself is beautifully neat, free from congestion and with inter-crossed roads nicely patterned. As in most Assam towns, Tezpur has little to boast of on its buildings. The visitor coming from north India or from Calcutta will find nothing impressive about them

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except, perhaps, their gracefulness. Frequent earthquakes in these parts prevent erection of heavy structures.

This being the headquarters of Darrang district, all the district offices and the post office, telegraph office, etc., are arranged beautifully on a lovely big lawn with fine roads crossing it, but, unfortunately, much of the open space is being encroached upon of late to meet the demands of more and more offices. This is the hub of the town, the European Club with its tennis courts occupying a portion.

On the upland which forms the background to the town are the District Jail and the famous Lunatic Asylum of Tezpur. This locality is very fine and commands a lovely view of the town below and the river skirting it beyond.

Tezpur, like Silchar and Dibrugarh, is the centre of Tea Industry and, as such, is the meeting place of the European planters of the region. There are lovely European provision stores, a Polo ground and a Race Course. The polo ground has ceased to be so recently, the lovely field being utilised for building sites.

The Race Course is a couple of miles away from the town. This is not a plain open field as elsewhere. It is quite different. A full round of hillocks has, at the foot of it inside, a narrow strip of grass lawn going full round too. This is the Course, one side of the hills forming ideal free gallery for spectators. The centre again of this wonderful race course is low land—a full-fledged paddy field. The harvest is being peacefully garnered by unconcerned peasants while the most exciting and colourful races are going on all sides of the field. What a contrast! It can hardly be that the whole of this ideal arrangement is the gift of mother nature, but all this could not also have been made artificially too. The cost would certainly be prohibitive.

It would seem that with a little patch work here and there the gift of nature has been turned to good account. This, too, is certainly unique.

Tezpur is quite a healthy place. It has almost an ideal winter. The summer too is quite tolerable. The country round about is a hunter's paradise. If tigers and leopards have become rare, in the extensive 'jheels', not far from the town, water-fowls are plenty. Deer shooting is quite common. The lucky sportsman may get bisons too. It is quite an exciting game—not a whit less than pig sticking.

HOTELS AND LODGINGS :

There are a number of Indian hotels but, perhaps, none on Western lines.

SILCHAR

In Assam Silchar is famed for its beauty next to Tezpur. Some place it even above Tezpur. The fact is that both the places are beautiful but the beauty of each is of a different kind. With the mighty Brahmaputra and the massive rocks on the riverside, the landscape of Tezpur is the work of an artist with bold strokes of the brush, whereas with the gentle river Barak flowing noiselessly in front—no rocks and no hilly background—the neat garden-like small town of Silchar is like a Moghal miniature painting.

Silchar may be reached both by train and by plane. Plane journey over the Tripura-Silchar and Silchar-Imphal routes is quite popular.

The landing ground, however, is full 16 miles away from the town across river Barak. The Air Lines Corporation station wagon with the load of passengers crosses the river on board a small ferry steam launch.

The Planters' Club with its tennis courts, etc., occupies the centre and a big slice of the town. The Co-operative Bank almost opposite to it looks prosperous. A bust of its founder and prominent worker adorns the ground in front.

There is a long park with a beautiful tank within it on one side of the town. A little beyond is the extensive play-ground. The Harisabha near it has a lovely image of Goddess Lakshmi in it. It is very creditable for a small place like Silchar to be able to put up such a beautiful image in its Harisabha. Apart from the cost, it speaks volumes of the religious zeal of the people. The bazar area is very neatly arranged and well maintained.

But what impressed the writer most of all in Silchar is the lovely sunrise across the river. The river is on

the east of the town. A village stands on the opposite bank on land shaped almost like a peninsula, the two arms of the river encompassing it on two sides.

Beyond the village is a high hill with woods at the foot of it. The sun rises from behind the hill. The whole setting is perfect. With the first peep of the purple disc and the darkness over the river thinning out, the river, village and the forest become veiled with a beautiful twilight crowned by the rays of the struggling sun. In a few seconds, the vast bosom of the river with the ripples on it becomes bluish, and then turns into a lovely shade of blue. The morning breeze sets in and turns the ripples into wavelets, different charming colours sparkling on them every moment. In a few more seconds, everything gets invested with a blend of light orange and red. This, too, does not last long. In the next few minutes, with the full round of the sun coming out the water in front, the two arms of the river assume three different colours. It is wonderful. But all this unique pageantry vanishes like magic with the sun rising higher, its fine red changing first to light yellow and then to glowing white. The white rays turn the waters into a mass of white, glistening in the sun like a mirror.

HOTELS AND LODGINGS :

The Planters' Club is the only place for Europeans. There are a few good Indian hotels. Paradise Hotel is on the river itself—part of the building has river water running underneath !

DIGBOI

The oil town of Digboi in the northernmost region of Assam is a unique creation of the Britisher. Out of almost impenetrable, tiger-infested and fever-haunted forest has sprung up, as if by the magician's wand, a fine, up-to-date town. Practically every community in India is represented here as also white people from many distant lands.

As the train from Tinsukia Junction pushes northwards through swampy virgin forests with beautiful small hamlets of primitive tribals here and there, one is filled with the foreboding that Digboi would not, at any rate, be a place for decent city people to live in. But emerging out of the small railway station, one cannot but be struck by the broad, straight, tarred road passing by lovely playground in front of a beautiful school building and the Club. The atmosphere is so pleasant and inviting that one can hardly believe that on all sides one is surrounded by the most terrible jungles where elephants roam in herds and tigers, even rhinos, wander about freely.

In a few minutes comes the shopping area with neat, well-stocked shops with the latest manufactures from countries of Europe and America. Just behind is the Market—not a mere open space with a few thatches, as in most other towns of Assam, but having cemented roads lined by stalls and shops on either side; full of all necessities of life. The market is provided with 'in' and 'out' gates which, when closed at night, make for complete security.

Next come the residential areas—mostly official quarters, quite well planned with flower gardens and plenty of open space. The huge steel structure of the Refinery in the background, nicely painted with dazzling aluminium paint, looks beautiful and dominates the town.

A few more paces away stands the big hospital occupying the top of several small hillocks interconnected by long covered stairways.

The Officers' quarters are on one side of the hospital with a nice motorable shady walk between them. The pleasant peculiarity of Digboi is the presence of a large number of small hillocks, just 10 ft. to 20 ft. in height, and the top of each is sufficient for two or three decent rooms. Out of this peculiarity has evolved a strange type of house construction—the "Chang Bungalow". While the living rooms are built on the top of the mound, the floor is projected on one side for the space of another big room and this rests on pillars only. The ground floor of this portion is not walled up and remains empty. The floor is generally used as a garage or car shelter. There are many bungalows of this type and the novelty seems nice. This is, evidently, an adaptation of the tree-top cottages of the Nagas and other wild tribes, the ladder being drawn up by them at night for fear of the wild beasts.

The town gently rises upward and, after only a few minutes walk, the outskirts are reached. A pathway leads to the top of a hill which commands a lovely view of the whole township extending up to the railway line on one side and dark jungles on the other. On the left, the woods terminate at the foot of the sky-high Patkoi range on the other side of which is the land of pagodas. It is very interesting to be there, at the very edge of this vast sub-continent, and one is filled with strange thoughts.

Beyond the town with its Refinery lies miles and miles of jungle clearing, bristling with the steel towers of oil wells—source of supply of the crude oil for the refinery to work upon. There is motorable road throughout, busy with cars of engineers and the loads of crude oil on way to the factory to yield their secrets to the scientist.

Inside the Refinery, the visitor finds unexpectedly at the entrance a huge library full of bulky scientific volumes consulted by grave-looking Indian scientists with microscopes and test tubes in front. The need for this thoroughly Science College atmosphere is hardly apparent to him. But when he is shown, one by one, no less than 35 different varieties of products and by-products of the simple molasses-like thick liquid which was seen trickling over the tin cans on the trucks, he is flabbergasted. The finest petrol, *i.e.*, aviation petrol, is on one end of the series and the thick wax on the other end. Hundreds of wagons are moving about inside the Refinery in which big packages of milk-white wax, ready-labelled to thousand destinations in all quarters of the globe, are being loaded. It may not be generally known that Digboi oil has the highest wax content in the world.

It is also quite interesting to see the automatic working of the oil pumps by means of the gas which comes out from most oil wells. If the visitor chances to see the sinking of a new well, he will see something worth remembering. Of course, the process is practically the same as sinking of a city tube-well, which is a common sight now in Indian towns, but the magnitude of the same process multiplied hundredfold, if not more, makes a great difference. First of all, the pipe to be sunk is about as big as the city sewerage pipe. For its sinking, the wooden platform built to hold the pipe high and driving it in is itself a huge thing. Far from human habitation in the absolute stillness of the forest, the monotonous sound of the huge mechanical hammering is awe-inspiring.

IMPHAL

Imphal was the capital of the erstwhile state of Manipur. Being in an extreme corner of India and surrounded almost on all sides by mountains, it is difficult of access and has thus remained unfamiliar to most Indians.

The route is from Manipur Road Railway Station (Dimapur of Second Great War). There is a bus service over a full hundred mile road to Imphal. It is a remarkable road, fascinatingly beautiful like a cobra and dreadful like it too. One may expect adventure at every step. Besides wild animals, the Naga villages, through which the road passes, may flare up any moment. It was a valuable life-line for the army during the war and so was constructed well. Before this, it was almost impassable during rains. It is fully tarred now and is maintained nicely. Passing over almost a never-ending succession of hills covered with the loveliest of green hill trees on both sides and a hill stream keeping company for a great distance, it ascends gradually upto the 7,000 feet high township of Mao, a few miles before Imphal. The road, thereafter, descends fast, passing through open fields with tall grass, till Imphal Air Field is reached. The land is absolutely level now and continues to be so upto Imphal town and beyond. Circular hills, not more than 5 to 7 miles away, surround the valley on all sides. It is a lovely spot and reminds one strongly of Dehra Dun, which is similarly encircled by hills. But the Dehra Dun valley is much bigger.

As the car comes to a halt at the motor stand, the visitor is struck by the beautifully straight, broad, parallel roads of the town. Maxwell Bazar is the centre of the wholesale trade, but is much cleaner than similar places in other towns. The enterprising Marwari community dominates the market. The Sadar Bazar road is broader and is full of cinema houses, respectable shops, restaurants, etc.

A little ahead is the Maharaja's palace. Although big, it is not so imposing as one would expect. Just outside the palace is the beautiful Govindjee's temple.

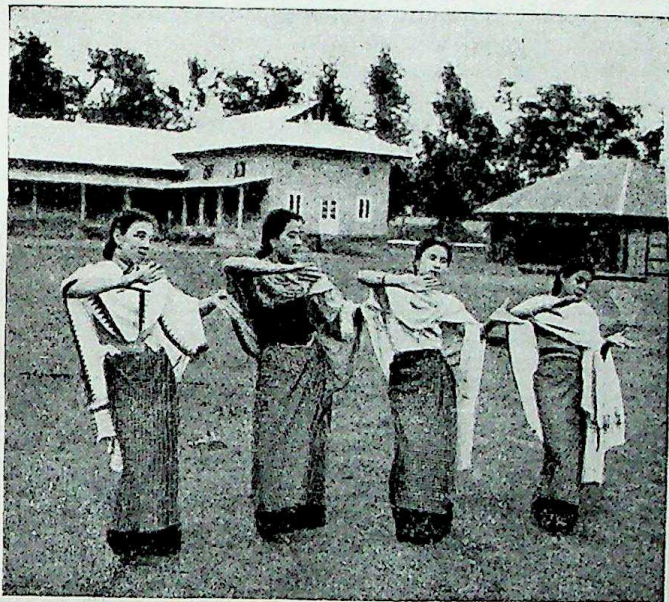
The Government college nearby is a big building. There are a number of high schools for boys and girls in the town. Female education is quite popular. Parties of girl students, in their characteristic skirts and scarfs of different colours, going to school or college on cycles is a beautiful sight. The girls have mostly fair complexion and good features. The men too are fair and tall with prominent noses. Elderly people are mostly dressed in dhoti and coat, buttoned upto the throat, with a white chaddar thrown round the neck. The younger ones have taken to trousers almost universally. Almost all men and women in Manipur have Vaishnava marking on their forehead, nose and throat. All Hindus are Vaishnavas there—disciples of Sri Chaitanya of Bengal. Although written in Bengali characters, the Manipuri language is quite unintelligible to a Bengalee. It seems to have a large percentage of Burmese words.

The main bazar of Imphal has recently been rebuilt beautifully in cement concrete. It is circular in shape and is designed like a wheel. Most shopkeepers are ladies. Dressed in their long coloured skirts (called Fanek), tied up above the breast, with a scarf round the shoulders, these healthy women look quite smart.

There is a separate open-air market for handloom products where women bring their own handiwork. They do not understand any language other than their own. Shopping is thus somewhat difficult without an interpreter. But, temperamentally, they are quite jovial and in the peculiar circumstances the foreigner creates great fun. Designs of the textiles are very artistic and the products are quite beautiful. Peculiarly, woven bed-covers and shoulder-bags of various colours and artistic designs are very popular with visitors.

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Manipur is known throughout India for its dancing. Almost all school and college girls learn carefully to dance. Ladies even of respectable families take part.



Imphal.

The valley has a small river passing by the town of Imphal. The Naga hills being closeby, there is a good percentage of Naga population in the town. There is even a separate Naga locality. There is a Bengalee locality too, called Babu Bazar, near the palace.

HOTELS AND LODGINGS :

Imphal has a number of Indian hotels of good standard, a few of these in European style.

UP State Museum, Lucknow

JABALPUR

Jabalpur in Madhya Pradesh is considered a unique beauty spot for its incomparable Marble Rocks. Even apart from it, the natural beauty all round the place is quite alluring. It is a combination of large tanks with lovely red lotuses on the waters and numerous small hills with huge granite boulders, so dark and roundish in shape that they may easily be mistaken for herds of elephants from a distance.

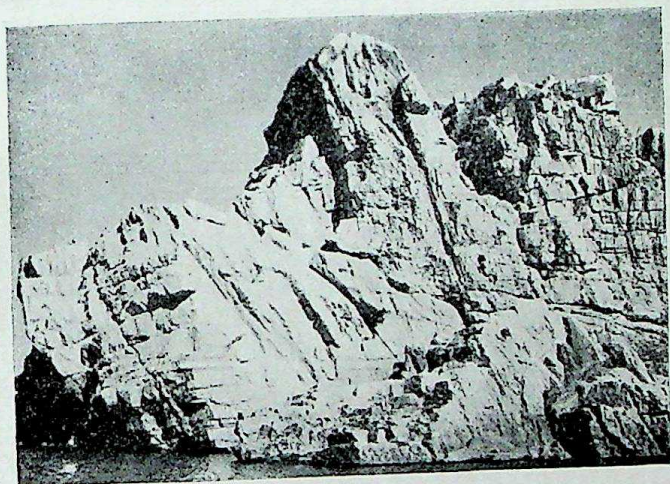
The pre-British town of Jabalpur is a typical Indian town with labyrinthine streets and lanes made almost invisible by tall houses on both sides and busy bazars. But the British so beautifully developed it that the city grew beyond all proportions making the small original town almost lost in the vastness of the place, from beautiful Napier town on one side to the Gun Carriage Factory on the other. Even beyond the factory, the countless Government Quarters that grew up during the second Great War extend to distant Khamaria terminating at the range of hills, standing like a wall in the distance.

Madan Mahal is one of the hills a few miles outside the city on which stood the palace of Rani Durgavati, the Gond queen, who stood four square for a long time against the Muslims. A portion of the buildings still stands. From this eminence, the view of the surrounding plains, dotted with lakes and hillocks with the sprawling city at a distance, is charming. Two broad highways emerge from the city in different directions, both reaching the river Nerbudda—one at Tilwari ghat, the other at Bheraghat.

Tilwari ghat is considered sacred by the Hindus. The beautiful stone ghat is always alive with devotional bathers, offering food to numerous large fish clearly visible in the transparent water.

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The other road runs 16 miles to the Marble Rocks, passing on the way the field of Tripuri, memorable for the historic session of the Indian National Congress held there under the presidentship of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose. A beautiful Gandhi Smarak building has been put up there.



Marble Rocks, Jabalpur.

As already stated, the beauty spot *par excellence* of Jabalpur is the Marble Rocks—continuous shapely cliffs of pure marble for about a mile on both banks of the swift-flowing Nerbudda. On moonlit nights the combination of marble, flowing water and the soft moonlight creates unspeakable charm and beauty.

There is Government arrangement for boating. For one full hour, the boat rows the visitor. As the boat proceeds, the visitor sits enthralled at this enchanting panorama.

This is not all. The majestic Nerbudda fall is less than a mile ahead. This is not a waterfall in the usual sense of the word. It is not simply a jet or two of water falling from a height. Here a whole river suddenly tumbles down hundreds of feet and what a beauty it creates! A huge mass of water hurtling down ceaselessly in tremendous speed is enough to charm anyone, but in moonlight one is almost struck dumb in wonderment at the grand handiwork of the Master Builder!

HOTELS AND LODGINGS :

There are many good hotels of all kinds, the foremost European hotel being Jackson's Hotel.

JAIPUR

The city of Jaipur is the most perfectly planned city of Rajasthan. It is surprising that almost all the buildings of the town are of one piece, beautiful architectural designs throughout, and some of them, extremely beautiful and far-famed and all of one colour. This may well be called the pink city of India.

As the visitor alights at the station and steps out on the street, the unexpectedly beautiful sight of large peacocks with the most gorgeous and lovely plumes stalking on the road or perched on the road-side trees or walls fascinates him. In all probability, the experience is the first of its kind for him.

The beautifully wide roads, flanked on both sides by lovely pink houses of the most pleasing oriental architecture, seem to have come out of a story book.

A few steps ahead, the wonderful Hawa Mahal—a strangely beautiful large mansion of stone, perforated all through as if made of wiremesh—cannot but arrest his attention. The design, too, is so original and charming. It seems unbelievable that such a light, yet enormous, structure should have escaped the ravages of time for over a century.

A few steps more, queer geometrical figures in stone are seen looming on the horizon. This is the famous Jantar Mantar or the observatory of Maharaja Jai Singh. To the lay mind, these huge quixotic shapes are meaningless. Although the modern age has forgotten their use or the progress of science has robbed them of their utility, they were highly useful in their time, especially to the astronomer king. Similar structures exist in Delhi and Varanasi too. To students of history, they are of sufficient interest at least to assess the extent of knowledge of astronomy in olden days.

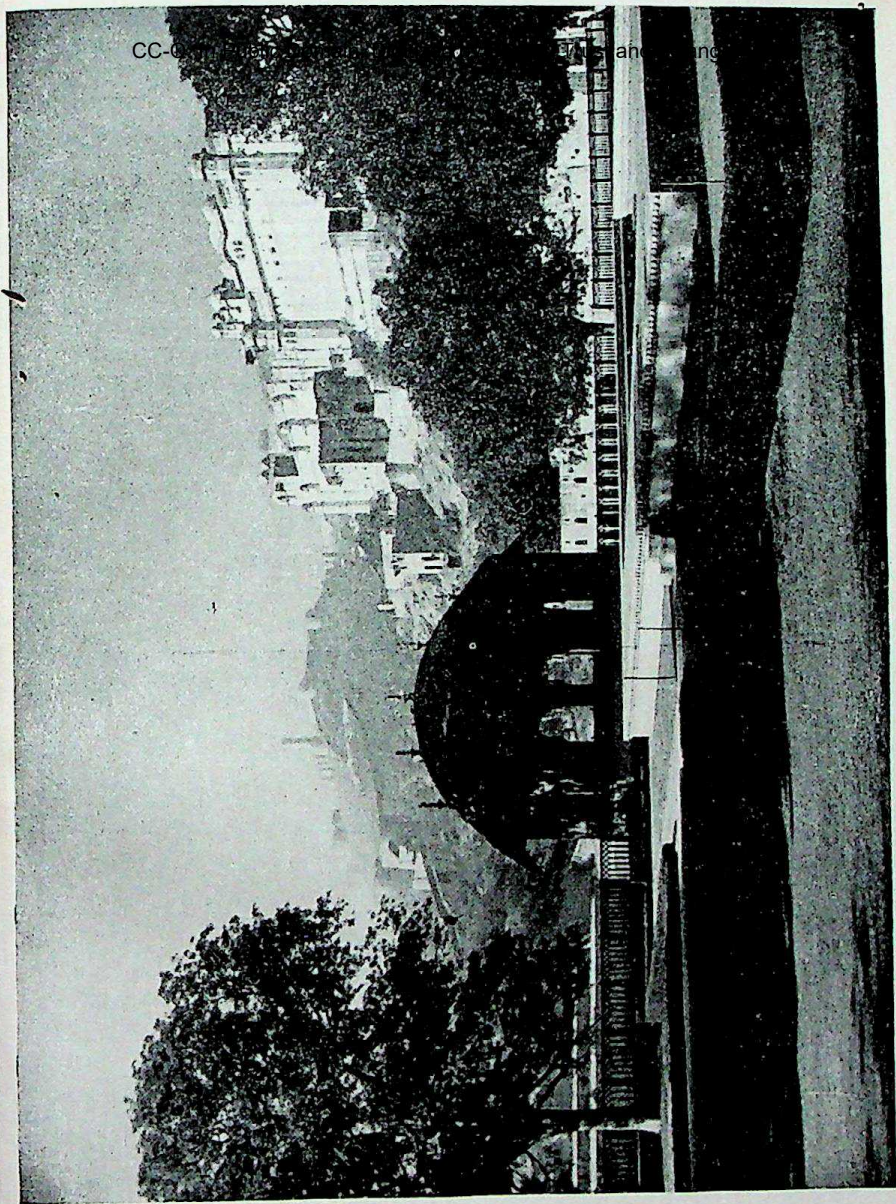
Rambagh palace, which is the palace of the Ex-Maharaja, is within a lovely garden almost at the centre of this fine city. A very good part of its compound is occupied by the Govindji Temple with the images of Sri Krishna and Radha. This is a very nice, spacious temple and is of great sanctity, because the deities in it are reputed to have been removed from their original habitation at Vrindaban for fear of desecration by the Moslems.

The Jaipur Museum, which is inside the beautiful public gardens, is remarkable in many ways. In the first place, the building itself is one of the finest architectural specimens of modern India, unaffected by Western influence. In the fine setting of the beautiful park, it looks extremely pretty. The Museum is more a natural history Museum than an archæological one. This is a welcome departure from the general run of Museums in India. The life of various types of animals and birds has been arranged in a very interesting manner. Thus, this serves the purpose more of education than the mere satisfaction of curiosity.

The park, too, has a difference. Here, it functions as a Zoological Garden as well. Tigers and lions have been kept loose in open spaces surrounded by moats. The School of Art of Jaipur has become well-known for producing artists of merit. Besides painting and culture, the school produces various articles of everyday use in highly artistic designs. The place is, therefore, well worth a visit.

But the main attraction of Jaipur, more than even the city itself, is its Ambar Fort.

Ambar, locally known as Amer, about three miles beyond the city of Jaipur, has the age-old palaces of the kings famous in history—Maharaja Jai Singh, Maharaja Mansingh, etc. The beautiful palaces within the massive fort, hoary with traditions of the chivalric



UP State Museum, Lucknow
Old Fort, Ambar, Jaipur.

middle ages, on top of the beautiful hill and enclosed by picturesque awe-inspiring stone walls give rise in the mind of the visitor to such pleasant romantic ideas as, perhaps, very few other places in India do.

Rajasthan has its own distinctiveness to a high degree. With her handsome men and women, their original and colourful costumes, rich sense of artistry in daily life and, more than all, the extremely interesting traditions of conduct and chivalry, Jaipur represents Rajasthan at its best. So, to the tourist and art lover, Jaipur is one of the most picturesque and romantic parts of India to visit.

HOTELS AND LODGINGS :

Of the numerous hotels, the best ones are (1) Jaipur Hotel, (2) New Hotel and (3) Kaiser-i-Hind Hotel.

UDAIPUR

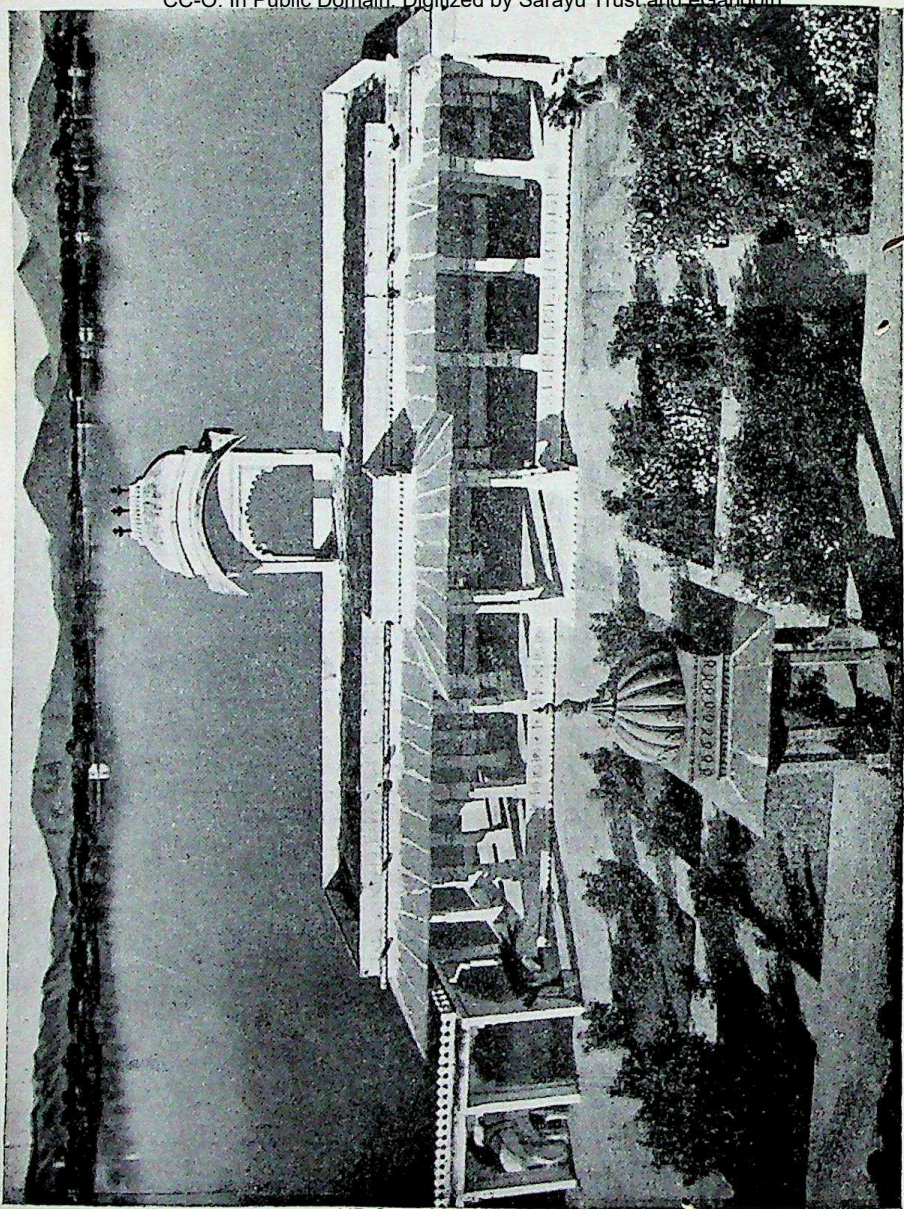
Udaipur is the centre of Rajput chivalry and Rajput history. While Jaipur yielded to play the Moghul tune, Udaipur and Chitor held their heads high. In the whole history of India, there is hardly another figure who has sacrificed so much and endured so much as Rana Pratap. Thus, every stone of Udaipur has a tale of unique heroism and adventure to tell and attracts visitors no less than the wonderful marble palaces or the enchanting lakes.

Udaipur has been called the "Venice of the East". Indeed so much of water in the heart of the desert land of Rajasthan is a wonder even more than Venice.

The magnificent palaces of Rajasthan, perched on the picturesque hills or overhanging the lake waters, are bewitching—a lovely combination of elegance, strength and beauty. They are a constant source of wonder to the visitor. There are no finer palaces than the Royal Palace of Udaipur, the island palaces on the Pichola Lake and the Sajjagarh Palace.

There is a chain of lakes about the city. The crystal clear waters now pushing far into land, now running straight or pulling out to a great distance at places with the beautiful ornamental balustrades running throughout like a huge serpent, with the land gently rising terrace by terrace terminating on the top in milk-white marble palaces, a pavilion here or a temple there, are lovely beyond description. The Fateh Sagar Lake is the most beautiful. There is the Pichola Lake and there are the lovely ghats like Gangon Ghat or Nane Ghat, visits to which in the cool of the evenings, especially in moonlit nights, are incomparably charming. A visit to Dudh Talia (Milk Pond), too, is highly interesting.

The more enthusiastic will undertake a drive to Jaisamand Lake, 32 miles from Udaipur. The sights on the way are well worth the trouble.



UP State Museum, Lucknow

Gaerden on the Elephant Island, Pichola Lake, Udaipur, Rajasthan.

The 14-mile long road to the famous temple of Eklingji is even more interesting. The road passes through delightful hill scenery throughout.

The famous shrine of Nathdwara, 32 miles away, should not be missed.

The gardens of Udaipur are delightful. The chief is Sahelion Ki Badi (*or* The Slave Girls' Garden). It is one of the splendid gardens of India. There are Sammons Garden and Sajjaniwas Garden which, too, are quite pretty.

The Royal crematorium or cenotaph of the Maharanas of Udaipur (Mahasthi) is highly interesting and beautiful too.

The Museum is a source of great interest and pleasure not only to the history lover but to others as well on account of the relics of the illustrious Ranas of Udaipur.

A visit to the great historic fort of Chitor, 70 miles away, connected by train and also by a bus service, will remain ever enshrined in memory.

The sacred spots associated with the life of the Saint Queen Mirabai will attract every visitor, more so the ladies. The tower of victory at Chitor, with its elaborate carvings and innumerable images from the Hindu pantheon, is really memorable.

HOTELS AND LODGINGS :

Lake View Hotel is the Chief hotel of Udaipur on a lovely site. There is a Dak Bungalow, a Circuit House, and also a good hotel under State management run on European lines.

HYDERABAD

The Nizam was reputed to be the richest man on earth. So his capital city may easily be imagined to be a show piece. It is indeed so. Although quite an old city founded by the Golconda Kings of the 16th Century, it is surprisingly modern in look, not a congested and huddled mass like old Delhi, old Lahore or even as old Lucknow. The roads are mostly beautifully broad and clean. The countless palatial buildings are well spread out in the whole big city—the fifth largest city in India.

The architectural beauty of the stately buildings arrests the attention of the newcomer. The broad roads are of cement concrete throughout—hardly any tar or macadam roads anywhere—and the whole city looks festive on account of the white domes of electric lamps permanently festooned in a row over every street. Each important crossing is profusely decked with beautifully arranged globes and is, thus, a blaze of light.

In the heart of the city stands the famous Char Minar. With each of the 4 minarets 180 ft. high, the massive old structure looks quite graceful.

Mecca Masjid, one of the largest in India, built by the Kutab Shahi Kings and completed by Emperor Aurangzeb has fine Stucco decorations in polished plaster.

Peeping through the gate of each palatial building, one is struck by the extensive and fine gardens so tastefully set out and so nicely maintained.

Bag-e-Am, the largest public garden, is much more beautiful in design than the usual city parks.

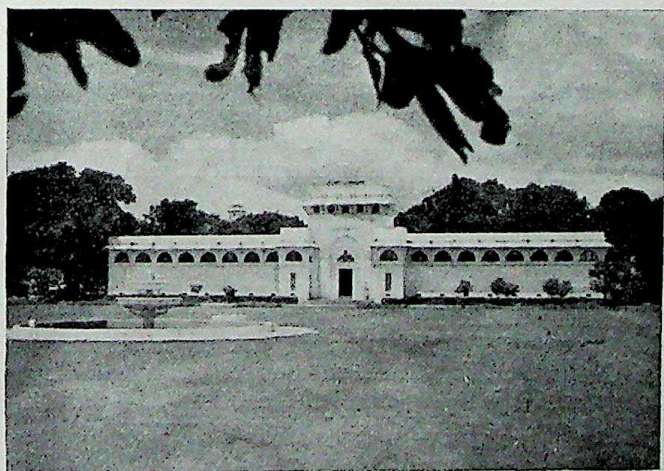
Abid Road, the fashionable shopping centre, must charm even the most fastidious visitor.

Even the two Railway Stations are beautifully designed and much more liberally planned than the traffic warrants.

With all this, Hyderabad would not have been half so beautiful but for the lovely lakes—Husain Sagar, Osman Sagar and Himayat Sagar.

As the train from Kazipet steams into the city, it passes by Husain Sagar. If the time is after dark, the visitor is overwhelmed by the array of beautiful lights in big white domes all along the opposite bank of the extensive lake. This beautiful road connecting Hyderabad with Secunderabad is on a half-mile embankment.

Secunderabad is the creation of the British as a military station with its invariable paraphernalia, parade grounds, barracks, etc. The civil area within it is, however, expanding fast and is developing into a suburb. The military is concentrated now at Bolarum, a few



Legislative Assembly, Hyderabad.

miles away. Secunderabad is less congested than the City, has more open spaces and less of the poorer class. The shops, cinemas, office buildings, etc., on the main highway, are elegant.

The aristocratic locality of Hyderabad is Begumpet. The residence of the Governor of Andhra State, of which Hyderabad is now the capital, and those of most of the ministers are here. These and the palatial houses of the rich are very lavishly planned, beautifully built and are surrounded by elaborate gardens, fountains, etc. The extensive palace of the Nizam—"The Kothi" as is locally known—is shut up behind high walls. The Falaknuma Palace, however, which is more modern, is visible perched up on a hill. Of the beautiful modern buildings, special mention must be made of the wonderful Osmania University. Only about a couple of miles from the city, the University buildings are, perhaps, the finest structure of their kind in India. Built within vast grounds, with all the attached colleges it is somewhat like the Hindu University at Banaras. Many of these, *e.g.*, the Engineering College, etc., are still under construction. The architecture of the Arts College building is remarkable. Under one roof there are some 50 class rooms, each accommodating about 250 students. A big model of the whole University with the various college buildings has been very beautifully made and housed in a special building constructed for the purpose. This is open to visitors.

But the most wonderful thing in Hyderabad is, perhaps, the unique Salar Jung Museum. It is the result of lifelong collection of a single man, containing the best specimens of man's handiwork from all quarters of the globe. The Museum consists of 75 halls, every one of which is full of stock of the most wonderful things of art, workmanship or of historical importance.

The big collection of such high quality in a single life is simply unbelievable. One is bewildered also at the

thought of the huge expenditure involved. To mention just one item, a life-size marble statue of a veiled lady, done with amazing skill, is said to have cost seven lacs of rupees. It is said that a good bulk of the collection is still lying packed up in godowns for want of accommodation. The gentleman with whom the idea originated is now dead. It is good that the Government of India have decided to take up the Museum and maintain it as a national treasure. The exhibits are arranged in various ways. There are China, Japan, and Burma Halls. There is a jewel hall, painting hall, sculpture hall, manuscript hall, etc. The attendant in each hall takes great pains to explain the special excellence of each item to the visitor.

This is, incidentally, the only Museum in India charging a "gate" for the visitor!

EXCURSIONS :

1. Within easy reach of Hyderabad and connected by beautiful roads, mostly cement concrete, there are several interesting spots :

- (1) Golconda Fort and Golconda Gold Mine—5 miles away, the Fort is famous in history as the impregnable stronghold of the Kutab Shahi kings of Hyderabad.
- (2) Tombs of Kutab Shahi kings—Also about 5 miles away. There are numerous beautiful tombs.
- (3) Bidar Fort—The town of Bidar stands on a plateau 2,330 ft. above sea level. The place is very picturesque and the climate is excellent. The English author Meadows Taylor was ecstatic over the spot, its beauty and its health. Bidar Fort is one of the strongest and best preserved forts of the Bahmani period. The massive guns are still in position, the largest Bari Tōp has a

circumference of 11 ft. near the muzzle (!) with the bore of 1' 8".

- (4) Nizam Sagar Dam—Across Manjira river, about 90 miles away from Hyderabad, is at once a great engineering feat and ideal beauty spot.
- (5) Palampet—An exquisite spot full of temples and marvellous sculptures.

HOTELS AND LODGINGS :

Percy's Hotel and the Rita are run on European lines. Indian style hotels are numerous and some of them are very good. Mayfair Restaurant is quite prominent.

MYSORE

Mysore is known as the "Garden City of India" on account of its well laid out gardens, parks and green open spaces. The Railway Station itself, shaped like a horse hoof with Grecian columns, is beautifully designed. A few paces outside the station are the finely built massive office buildings of the railway with tennis lawns, etc. A little further up is the Maharaja's palace. Built of light red stone in Indo-Saracenic style, it is a noble edifice. The huge gateway itself is a work of art.

A fine ancient temple of great architectural beauty stands in the nearby hill—the temple of goddess Chamundeswari who is said to have destroyed the demon Mahishasura or the buffalo demon. Mysore, or more properly Mahishasurapura, derives its name from this mythological incident. The goddess is worshipped by the Maharaja every morning. From the temple an excellent panoramic view of the well-planned city could be had.

The University buildings are close by. Though these buildings are not pretentious, this University is reputed to be a seat of sound learning.

The most attractive spot for the visitor is the Zoo. Smaller than some of the zoos of Northern India, its variety and selection are superior.

The Art Gallery has very rich and attractive collections.

The Dusshera festival of Mysore is far famed. The whole city bedecks itself in festive attire for the celebrations culminating in the unsurpassed pomp and pageantry on the concluding day when a long and unique procession with richly caparisoned elephants, horses and thousands of people goes round the city. The people seem to go mad in ecstatic joy and spend the day in great merriment.

Nearly 12 miles from the city are the famous Brindavan Gardens at the foot of the Krishnarajasagar dam on the river Kaveri. The conception of utilising the water pressure of the dam and directing the flow by opening out hundreds of sluices, forming beautiful patterns, sky high fountains and lovely cascades, is really creditable. Around these artistic waters, a garden of great beauty has been created. Thousands of multicoloured electric lamps have been placed inside the waters. When these are lit at night on holidays and festival days, the leaping fountains and shimmering pools of water are bathed in a blaze of coloured light providing a rare feast to the eye. The pools are so vast that boating is done.

For the convenience of visitors, luxury hotels have been built in the vicinity. There is nothing like this anywhere else in India.

Mysore may well be proud of two of its historical buildings, Daria Daulat (River of Wealth) and Gumbuz. Daria Daulat is a fine wooden structure inside a beautiful garden and was used by Tipu Sultan as summer palace.

Gumbuz is a beautiful mausoleum holding the remains of Hyder Ali and his parents.

An account of Mysore will hardly be complete without mention of Sravana Belagola and Gersoppa, though both are distant from the city.

Sravana Belagola is 62 miles away. The town of this name is famous for the colossal monolithic statue of Gomateswara, 58 ft. high, carved out of a rocky peak of Chandragiri Hill. This statue is a masterpiece of mediæval sculpture. Of this Fergusson said :

"There is nothing grander or more impressive anywhere out of Egypt and even there no statue surpassing it in height."

Gersoppa (Jog) falls, the loftiest falls in India, are formed by the Sharavati river dropping down 830 ft. straight in four streams—the Raja, the Roarer, the Rocket and the White Lady (La dame Blanche). It is one of the grandest sights India has to offer to the foreign visitor.

The falls are easily accessible by car or bus from Talguppa railway station on the route from Shimoga.

CLIMATE :

The general elevation ranging from about 2,000 feet above sea level, the place is comparatively dry. The rains, too, are not heavy. Summer is tolerable and there is practically no winter. Being, moreover, a neat town, it is ideally suited for old people.

HOTELS AND LODGINGS :

Mysore may well boast of excellent hotels run on European lines, *e.g.*,

- (1) Hotel Metropole run by the State,
- (2) Hotel Carlton, and
- (3) Hotel Savoy.

BANGALORE

The city of Bangalore in Mysore State is considered by many as the finest modern city of India. This, coupled with its comparatively cool and salubrious climate, makes it very attractive to the people of Northern India too. In fact many Government pensioners, the majority of whom are Anglo Indians, have settled there.

It has become an all-India centre for many important Government-sponsored industrial establishments, such as the Hindustan Aircraft Factory, the Indian Institute of Scientific Research and Officers' Training Centre for the Defence. It is an important centre of the Air Force as well. With the growth of these colossal establishments, the city has almost doubled itself in recent years.

It is a well-planned modern city. Broad, straight roads and beautiful buildings in sylvan surroundings make it indeed a modern garden city.

Of the buildings, the foremost is the palace of the former Maharaja of Mysore built in the style of a European castle with extensive and lovely gardens.

Gardens, big and small, are scattered all over the place, but the chief of them is Lal Bagh. So great is the charm of this big and finely created garden that it is claimed to be the finest of its kind in Asia. Apart from its beauty, it contains an amazing variety of plants and trees of tropical and sub-tropical regions.

Bangalore has all amenities of modern life including a race course. Its population is so cosmopolitan that it has almost ceased to be a South Indian City.

CLIMATE :

Being situated on a plateau about 3,000 ft. above sea level, it is higher in elevation than Mysore and is slightly healthier. It is delicious throughout the year.

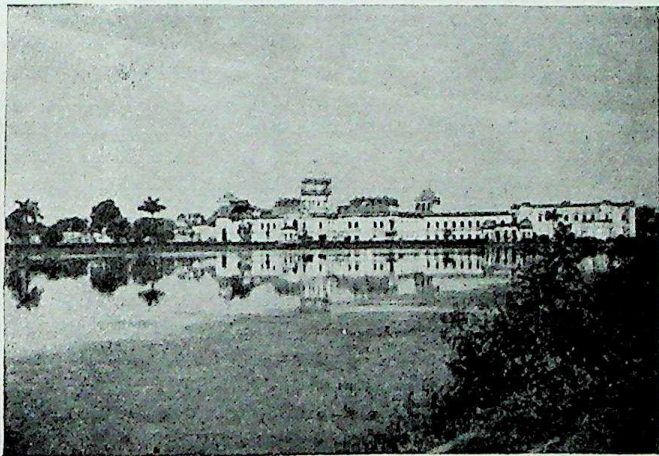
HOTELS AND LODGINGS :

There are numerous hotels, the best being the Central and the West End. In addition, there are plenty of guest houses eager to take up boarders.

AGARTALA (TRIPURA)

Agartala was the capital city of the State of Tripura. Not being linked by rail with the outside world, it is best approached by air. The unusually tastefully decorated air-field cannot fail to be noticed by the visitor.

The lengthy road to the town passes through charming hill scenery. Occasional patches of paddy add to the variety.



The Palace Agartala (Tripura).

The stately palace of the Maharaja dominates the town. With a spacious lovely tank in front, the huge structure is strikingly imposing.

The three main roads all emanate from the palace gates. These are quite broad and busy roads. It is strange that the architecture of the houses on either side of each road is identical. Continuous white-washed Grecian columns skirting lengthy verandahs seem never-ending. There is hardly a gap between two houses. It is difficult to say where one house ends and another

begins. A single verandah seems to run on each side of the road. It is decidedly unique and is very beautiful.

The grandeur and rich stock of the shops seem unusual for a town in such an outlying region of the country. The number of jewellery shops, restaurants, up-to-date sweet-meat shops, medical halls and clothes houses seems to be somewhat out of proportion for the population of the place. Although they, evidently, cater for the whole State and not simply for the town itself, yet their opulence is unmistakable and very refreshing. Being copiously provided with electric lamps, the streets become very attractive after nightfall.

Just outside the town, occupying the whole top of a hill, stand the newly built stately buildings of Agartala College. The spacious library hall and the rich collection of books from East and West make one envy the fortunate students of the institution. They are fortunate also for the ideally quiet and attractive environs in which they receive education.

A wholly different kind of educational institution of Agartala in the opposite quarter of the town is also well worth a visit. This is Netaji Subhas High School, the life work of a band of idealist young men. This institution raised its head slowly but surely during British days despite official apathy and occasional obstruction. Housed in humble but spacious thatched hutments with bamboo walls, this is both a boys' school and a girls' school—boys' school in the better part of the day and girls' school in the morning. While imparting the usual curricular education, it aims at something higher—selflessness, fellow-feeling, health, character-building and patriotism.

Agartala is provided with a number of Indian hotels of good standard catering mostly Bengali food. The big Tripura Hotel has a fine double-storeyed building and is wellrun.

Agartala is connected direct to Dum Dum (Calcutta) by air and so is easily accessible. It is a fine healthy spot to spend a holiday in and people there have not been spoilt by too many 'changers' as yet.

COURTALLAM FALLS

This unique gift of nature is in Tirunelveli district in South India. This 288 ft. high big sheet of shimmering loveliness, about 25 ft. in width in the rains, is not only a constant feast to the eye of young and old but what a great source of pleasure for the bathers night and day in the summer season ! Beneficient, moreover, it is in more ways than one. Bathing below the heavy impact of the falling waters promotes hunger as few things can with such effortlessness, cures the skin of most ailments and is even soothing to the nerves and distracted brains.

The site, moreover, being about 550 ft. above sea level, is healthy and not too cold, although the southern tip of the Western ghat is only 10 miles away.

This lovely piece of nature's grandeur is, moreover, situated not in the midst of inaccessible forests or on forbidding heights of the hills, but in homely domestic surroundings easily accessible by road and rail. The village Tiru-Courtallam, now shortened to Courtallam, is only 32 miles from the railway station of Tenkasi. It is connected also by motorable roads from four well-known towns on four sides—Tirunelveli in the east, Trivandrum in the west, Madurai in the north and Papanasam in the south.

As early as in 1811, the East India Company appointed a Medical Council to investigate into the properties of the water. They gave very favourable report.

Bishop Caldwell, a long resident of the district, studying the water for years, remarked that Courtallam water is one of the finest and foremost in the world and characterised it as "the Spa of the South." Many civil and military officers in early days used to spend the whole summer there using it as a sanatorium.

A European medical man, Dr. White, counted in 1935 more than 2,000 varieties of herbs and plants in the vicinity which substantially contributed much to the medical properties of the water.

The place is fast developing into a small township with all necessary conveniences. The neighbouring hillocks and the well laid out park make for pleasant living and enjoyment of fine scenery morning and evening.

From early days, Courtallam has been a well-known place of pilgrimage. The Temple of Courtalanather is very old, fine and popular. There are other attractive shrines too, especially the small temple known as Chitra Sabhai for its fine workmanship in wood.

Among the recent amenities, the most prominent is the big concrete archway built just beneath the falls with iron railings for the convenience and safety of bathers. This has made bathing very enjoyable. There are separate sections for men and women.

HOTELS AND LODGINGS :

There are no hotels in European style. The Indian style hotels are very few too, but there are Choultries (or Dharmashalas) where visitors generally put up, dining in the eating houses or restaurants of which there are many.

Not very costly houses and small bungalows are available for long stay.

GANGTOK

Visiting Kalimpong one is tempted to proceed a stage further, though out of India proper, and have the unique opportunity of being in the land of Sikkim and especially in its capital city, Gangtok. Buses ply regularly from Kalimpong. The distance is only 37 miles—the road passing through Pedong and Pakyong.

There is direct route to Gangtok also from Darjeeling *via* Badamtam, Namchi, Temi and Song. The distance is over 56 miles. This route is very interesting for trekkers and is provided with dak bungalows all along.

The first $7\frac{1}{2}$ miles to Badamtam is continuous descent, after which one has to encounter the corresponding ascent of 8 miles to Namchi which is on the border of Sikkim State. The dak bungalow at Namchi is 5,200 feet above sea level. Namchi village and bazar are a little distance away.

The next stretch of 11 miles to Temi (5,000 ft.) passes through enchanting forest scenery. The lovely view of Rangit river rippling below on one side and the thickly wooded slopes on the other is very refreshing. The last lap of the journey to Temi is a pleasant descent. At the end of the journey, the labours are amply compensated by the enthralling view of snow-clad Nathu La looming on the horizon. The pass at Nathu La is the gateway to Tibet.

Climbing down the next 7 miles, the Tiesta river is reached and is crossed over the bridge at Rashab.

The next 5 miles to Song (4,500 ft.) is steady ascent. The bungalow at Song is pretty and affords fair view of Tibet in front at a distance.

From Song to Gangtok, it is 15 miles. After the first 6 miles of ascent, the monastery (Gompa) of Rumtek is

reached. Though not one of the bigger ones, the monastery is well worth a visit, especially for those new to Tibetan Buddhism. The next 4 miles is a pleasant descent to a small branch of Rongni river. The last 5 miles is virtually a bridle-path climbing steadily to Gangtok.

Gangtok is a modern township. The old capital was at Tumlong, 13 miles away. It is almost deserted now and has the appearance of a small cluster of religious buildings only.



Lama Procession Gangtok.

Gangtok is dominated by the Maharaja's palace (Durbar Hall) on one side and the Residency on the other. Midway between these two is the 'saddle' of the ridge which holds the neatly laid out town with all the paraphernalia of Government. The town has the appearance of a fine park. The splendid dak bungalow is nicely situated and commands bewitching view of a perpetual snow line.

Sikkim is reputed, and justly so, for its rich flora. It is vividly green—almost the whole of it. There are 600 varieties of flowering plants! Flowers of almost every description abound. The most outstanding speciality of them is the rhododendron. Such a variety of colours in rhododendrons is hardly available anywhere. There are as many as 10 varieties!

The bamboo is another speciality of Sikkim. As many as 20 varieties are said to be available and are put to every conceivable use.

Next come the *avifauna*. In loveliness of plumage, immense variety and number, the birds of Sikkim are unique. In the lovely scenery of hills, woods and snows, the birds combined with lovely butterflies create a veritable fairy land.

